

# **CHARGES SCHEME 2023/24**

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Household



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## 1 SCOPE OF THIS CHARGES SCHEME

- |  |     |   |
|--|-----|---|
| <i>Charges scheme</i>  | (1) | This Charges Scheme is made by Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991.  |
| <i>Scope of charges scheme</i>                                 | (2) | This Charges Scheme sets out NWL's end customer retail charges, terms and conditions applicable to household customers, in the Northumbrian Water region.   |
| <i>Contents of charges scheme</i>                              | (3) | This Scheme shall come into effect on 1 April 2023 and shall remain in force until revoked, amended, superseded or modified by NWL.   |
| <i>NWL operating regions</i>                                   | (4) | It explains how our charges are calculated, what the charges are, and states the necessary legal requirements and responsibilities for both household customers and Northumbrian Water.   |
| <i>Applicability of this document to NWL operating regions</i> | (5) | For similar information relating to previous years, reference should be made to the Charges Schemes of the year concerned.  |
|  | (6) | NWL acts as a water and sewerage undertaker in two separate regions of England. The areas served and the services provided are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The "Northumbrian Water" (NW) region in North East England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Water and sewerage services are provided across the region, except for an area around Hartlepool where water services are provided by Hartlepool Water.</li> <li>(ii) For water charges for customers served by Hartlepool Water, reference should be made to their charges scheme.</li> <li>(iii) Additionally a small number of customers are served by United Utilities for their water or sewerage services, reference should be made to their charges scheme as appropriate.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(b) The "Essex &amp; Suffolk Water" (ESW) region in South East England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) ESW provides water services only in areas of Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Greater London.</li> <li>(ii) Sewerage services in these areas are provided by either Anglian Water Services Limited or Thames Water Utilities Limited. For charges related to these sewerage services reference should be made to their respective charges schemes.</li> <li>(iii) ESW collects sewerage service charges on behalf of and as agents for Thames Water Utilities Limited within parts of ESW, and these charges will be shown on the same bill as the ESW water charges.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|  | (7) | The provisions of this document apply to the Northumbrian Water operating region. Any references to NWL, Northumbrian Water or NW should be used interchangeably.   |

*Publication of documents and information*

- (8) This Charges Scheme as well as other leaflets and information are published on our website ([www.nwl.co.uk](http://www.nwl.co.uk)), at the address given below, or on request by contacting Northumbrian Water.

## **2 DEFINITIONS**

*Definition of standard terms*

- (9) A number of terms are used throughout this scheme; they normally have the following meanings:
- (a) “water services charges” means a charge or any combination of charges for water supply, and sewerage and sewage disposal services;
  - (b) “supplied property” relates to water services and means any property which benefits from or is;
    - (i) receiving a supply of water or;
    - (ii) occupied by a person having the use of or right to use or benefit of facilities (whether or not for the benefit of the property) in connection with Northumbrian Water’s water supply function;
  - (c) “connected property” relates to sewerage services and means any property which benefits from or is;
    - (i) drained by a sewer or drain connecting either directly or through an intermediate sewer or drain with a public sewer or sewage treatment works provided by Northumbrian Water or;
    - (ii) occupied by persons having the use of or right to use or benefit of facilities (whether or not for the benefit of the property) which drain to a sewer or drain so connecting;
  - (d) “customer” means in the case of water services, the “Consumer”, as defined in Section 93 (1) of the Water Industry Act 1991 and in respect of other services means the person for whom a service is performed, facilities provided or right made available in pursuance of Northumbrian Water’s water supply or sewerage and sewage disposal functions (without prejudice to the foregoing this means the person provided with or benefiting from water supply or sewerage or sewage disposal);
  - (e) “occupier” bears the same meaning as the word “occupier” in Section 144 of the Water Industry Act 1991. The meaning of “occupier” is essentially similar to that used in the field of rating, as elucidated in case law;
  - (f) “hereditament”, “valuation list” and “valuation officer” shall have the meanings assigned to them by Section 115 (1) of the General Rate Act 1967 as if that Act remained in force;
  - (g) “property” or “premises” means the hereditament or if there is no hereditament it is land, any interest in land or any easement or right in, on, under or over land;
  - (h) “household premises” and “household property” means premises in which, or in any part of which, a person has their home and the principal use of the premises is as a home.



- For mixed-use premises where the principal use of the premises is in question; the premises will be defined as non-household where both the household part of the premises is dependent in some way upon the non-household part and the premises are liable for business rates or exempt from business rates;
  - (i) “non-household premise” and “non-household property” means premises which are not household premises. For the definition of household premises see paragraph (9)(h);
  - (j) “occupied property” means one of the following conditions apply:
    - anyone is living at the property;
    - a property contains furnishings and fittings;
    - when a property is unfurnished and water is being used for any purpose, including refurbishment.
  - (k) “domestic sewage” means discharge of waste water from customers’ premises that has been used for domestic purposes;
  - (l) “rateable value” means the net annual value shown on the valuation list made under Section 67 General Rate Act 1967 that was applicable at 31 March 1990 for households;
  - (m) “normal working hours” are Monday to Friday, 8:00 – 16:00 (excluding bank holidays);
- (10) In this Scheme words in the singular shall include the plural and vice-versa except where the context otherwise requires.



### 3 INFORMATION ABOUT NORTHUMBRIAN WATER

#### 3.1 CONTACTING NORTHUMBRIAN WATER

- (11) Information about Northumbrian Water can be obtained from our website at [www.nwl.co.uk](http://www.nwl.co.uk) or by contacting us using the details below.

(a) In writing:

*Other information  
and contact  
details*

Northumbrian Water  
Customer Centre  
PO Box 300  
Durham  
DH1 9WQ

(b) By Telephone : 0345 733 5566

- (12) Water quality information is available free of charge on our website.

*Water quality  
information*

- (13) Water quality sampling results may be inspected and a printout given. This service is free to residents for samples taken within their supply zone.

#### 3.2 COMPLAINTS

- (14) We aim to deal with queries and complaints speedily and satisfactorily. However, if you are unhappy with our response, you should write to the following address for a review of the decision:

*Contact details for  
Northumbrian  
Water's  
complaints team*

Customer Care Review Team  
Northumbrian Water Ltd  
PO Box 200  
Durham  
DH1 9WG  
Telephone: 0345 733 5566  
Website: [www.nwl.co.uk](http://www.nwl.co.uk)

- (15) If you remain dissatisfied with the way your complaint has been handled, you may refer the matter to the Consumer Council for Water which will act on your behalf. Their address is:

*Contact details for  
CCW's complaints  
team*

Consumer Council for Water  
23 Stephenson Street,  
Birmingham,  
B2 4BH  
Telephone: 0300 034 2222  
Email: [enquiries@ccwater.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ccwater.org.uk)





## 4 LIABILITY FOR CHARGES

### 4.1 GENERAL LIABILITY

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Chargeable properties</i>                       | (16) Water charges will be applied to any supplied property and sewerage charges to any connected property, as defined in section 2.  |
|  | (17) Liability to pay charges is confined to those persons who are occupiers save in those circumstances where the Water Industry Act itself otherwise provides.  |
| <i>Liability for charges</i>                       | (18) In most landlord and tenant situations the result will be that it is the tenant who is to be charged as occupier and not the landlord. The significant exceptions include the case of holiday lets, the case of lodgers and bed and breakfast accommodation, where the occupation of the tenants is too transient. In such cases the landlord will be treated as being in occupation.  |
| <i>Multiple customers</i>                          | (19) Where more than one person is the customer in respect of a single supplied property, or connected property, then each such customer shall be jointly and severally liable for all charges arising in respect of that supplied or connected property and Northumbrian Water may collect all charges in respect of the supplied property or connected property from any one of the said customers.   |
|  | (20) Section 144C of the Water Industry Act (when it is brought into force and subject to any transitional provisions) will require the owner of residential premises which are occupied by one or more persons other than the owner, and not by the owner, to arrange for Northumbrian Water to be given information about the occupiers.  |
| <i>Landlord responsibilities</i>                   | (a) If the owner fails to supply the required information, then they become jointly and severally liable for water and sewerage charges.<br><br>(b) In preparation for the legislation coming into force landlords are requested to use the water industry's tenant address portal ( <a href="http://www.landlordtap.com">www.landlordtap.com</a> ) to register details of new tenancies and those liable for water and sewerage charges at their properties. |
| <i>Separate supplies for unmeasured properties</i> | (21) Where a customer requests the disconnection of an unmeasured supply that also serves other customers, they must first install a separate supply so that their disconnection can be carried out unless agreed otherwise by Northumbrian Water.  |
| <i>County Court - fee recovery from defendant</i>  | (22) If Northumbrian Water takes action through the County Court to recover outstanding debts, Northumbrian Water may recover costs and fees from the defendant in accordance with the rates stipulated by the Ministry of Justice as varied from time to time.   |
|  | <b>4.2 COMMON SUPPLIES</b>  |
| <i>Liability when benefitting from a service</i>   | (23) Where a customer or property benefits from a water or sewerage service indirectly via or from another property, Northumbrian Water may charge the occupiers of both properties for the supply of water and sewerage services on  |





	<p>same basis as would apply if both properties were provided with separate services.</p>
<i>Limitations on common supplies</i>	<p>(24) If services provided to one property are used by the occupier of another property or for the benefit of another property, these services must be metered. Northumbrian Water can recover from the occupiers of either or both properties the costs of any services provided prior to their being metered.</p> <p>(25) Northumbrian Water requires all supplies to new or redeveloped properties to be separate metered supplies and the requirements of section 64 of the Water Industry Act 1991 will apply. Where a common supply exists due to historic reasons or where it is not practicable to install separate supplies, paragraph (26) will apply.</p>
<i>Common metered supplies</i>	<p>(26) In relation to properties that have a metered water supply connection which supplies more than one property in different occupancies, each customer shall be held jointly and severally liable for water and sewerage charges. Charges will be recoverable under one of the following conditions:</p>
<i>Common billing agreements</i>	<p>(a) Northumbrian Water may make an agreement, known as a Common Billing Agreement, with the Owners, Property Management Company or other party to accept liability for the payment of:</p> <p>(i) the metered water supply charges for all the properties supplied through the common meter, unless agreed otherwise by Northumbrian Water;</p> <p>(ii) <b>Plus:</b> all sewerage services charges due in respect of all the properties supplied through the common meter, including for periods when the properties are unoccupied.</p>
<i>Liability for charges where a common billing agreement does not exist</i>	<p>(b) In all other situations, Northumbrian Water reserves the right to apply the most appropriate form of charge to all properties supplied or connected through the single metered water supply connection. This may take the form of apportionment of the measured charge, or any other form of charge set out in this charges scheme and will be chosen by Northumbrian Water.</p>
<i>Installing separate supplies</i>	<p>(27) Owners may opt, at their cost, to have a separate metered supply installed to each property (if technically possible) which would enable all water and sewerage charges to be made direct to the occupiers.</p>
	<p><b>4.3 MOVING HOUSE</b></p>
<i>Moving house</i>	<p>(28) A new occupier of a supplied or connected property must notify Northumbrian Water of the date they are to become liable for charges and provide all details reasonably required by Northumbrian Water for its charging purposes before they take benefit from the services provided. Northumbrian Water can recover from the occupier the costs of any services that have been provided from the date of occupation.</p>
<i>Basis of charges</i>	<p>(29) Existing properties may be charged on a measured or unmeasured basis, and the customer may not choose which basis of charge is applied. The only exception to this is if a property is unmeasured, the customer may request a</p>



meter to be installed under the optant metering scheme, as set out in section 9.1.

- (30) Northumbrian Water may, on change of occupier install a meter and charge on a measured basis under the selective metering scheme set out in section 9.2.
- (31) Customers planning to move to an existing property within Northumbrian Water's area of supply may telephone 0345 733 5566 to obtain information on the basis upon which they will pay charges for that property.

#### **4.4 WAIVING CHARGES IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

- (32) Charges for water and sewerage services remain due whilst a property is occupied as defined in paragraph (9), unless one of the following conditions applies:
- (a) If a household property that is furnished falls vacant due to exceptional circumstances, for example long term hospitalisation of the sole occupant or death of the sole occupant, then on notification, charges may be cancelled;
- where a household property becomes vacant due to death of the sole occupant, Northumbrian Water should be informed. If the property becomes re-occupied by any person, full charges will be applied.
- (b) If an unmeasured property is occupied but the water supply to the premises has been turned off by Northumbrian Water, then no water volume or foul sewerage charges will apply. Charges for surface water and highway drainage, if appropriate, will continue to be due;
- where water is being used in small quantities, such as for refurbishment, occupiers of unmeasured properties may wish to opt to be charged on a measured basis so that charges are more cost reflective of the water consumed.

*Waiving charges  
in special  
circumstances*

#### **4.5 VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT)**

- (33) Charges in this scheme are stated exclusive of VAT. Any VAT will be applied as required.
- VAT is usually zero rated for water and sewerage services to households.

*VAT*

#### **4.6 LIABILITY FOR OTHER CHARGES**

- (34) When a customer chooses an alternative or additional supply to that provided to the site from the Northumbrian Water mains supply and requires Northumbrian Water to provide facilities that would enable the customer to take additional supplies on an intermittent basis or that would serve as an emergency or standby provision, Northumbrian Water may require that the customer enter into an agreement to pay such additional sums as may be necessary to ensure that the costs of providing such facilities are met.

*Standby supply  
agreements*



## 5 WATER SUPPLY CHARGES

### 5.1 DEFINING THE CLASS OF CUSTOMER FOR CHARGING

- Liability for water charges* (35) All customers, as defined in paragraph (9), are liable for Northumbrian Water's charge for water.
- (36) There are two classes of customer;
- Types of customer* (a) unmeasured, where the supply of water is not charged by reference to volume, and;
- (b) measured, where the supply of water is charged by reference to volume.
- Levels of tariffs* (37) The structure of charges applied for each class of customer is set out in this section, and the level of each charge is detailed in Appendix A.
- Metered properties* (38) All new properties will be required to be metered and charged on a measured basis. This includes any connection to be used wholly or partially for supplying water for firefighting purposes.
- Changing to being charged on a measured basis* (39) Unmeasured household customers may opt to have a meter installed, and be charged on a measured basis, under the optant programme detailed in Section 9.1.
- (40) Northumbrian Water may require some properties to have a meter installed, and be charged on a measured basis, as detailed under the selective metering programme as detailed in Section 9.2.

### 5.2 UNMEASURED WATER CHARGES

- Structure of unmeasured charge* (41) The annual tariff for unmeasured supplies shall be based on either;
- (a) the Standard Unmeasured Water Tariff as detailed in 5.2.1 or;
- (b) an Assessed Charge as detailed in section 5.2.3.

#### 5.2.1 Standard Unmeasured Water Tariff

- Standard Unmeasured Charges* (42) The annual tariff for unmeasured supplies to a supplied property shall consist of;
- (a) A fixed charge, plus;
- (b) A charge based on the rateable value of that property as detailed in section 5.2.2.
- Opting for a meter* (43) Under the Water Industry Act 1999, all household customers have the right to request that their charges are made by reference to volume. This request will cause a meter be fitted to their supply at no direct charge to themselves. All conditions relating to moving to charges made by reference to volume are detailed under section 9.1.



- Selective metering* (44) If a property falls under the conditions detailed in section 9.2 charges will be required to be made by reference to volume. A meter will be required to be installed at a property, and measured charges applied to the property.

### 5.2.2 Rateable Value

- Rateable value charge* (45) The annual rateable value charge is produced by multiplying the rateable value of the property by a rate in the pound.

- (46) The rateable value is as set out and published in the Valuation List at 31 March 1990 as defined in paragraph (9)(l). The only exceptions to this are where a property:

- (a) Does not appear on the 31 March 1990 Valuation List;  
(b) The valuation on the 31 March 1990 Valuation List is shown as under revision or as disputed;  
(c) has been significantly altered, merged with another or split into parts or demolished since 31 March 1990;

*Rateable value*

- (47) In the exceptional cases set out in paragraph (46), and where the property is not charged on a measured basis, a notional rateable value may be applied to the property and used as the rateable value for charging purposes.

*Calculating notional rateable value*

- (48) Any new or revised notional rateable value will be calculated by Northumbrian Water, taking into account the changes to the property and the rateable values of similar neighbouring properties.

### 5.2.3 Assessed Tariff for water

*Applying assessed charges*

- (49) Where a property is charged on an unmeasured basis and has been deemed unmeterable by Northumbrian Water, in accordance with the metering policies set out in section 9, the customer will have a choice of having their charges based on the standard unmeasured charge or an assessed charge. The conditions surrounding this are set out in section 9.1.3 and 9.1.4.

- (50) The assessed charges are a fixed annual charge, based on assumed volumes of water consumption. There are two assessed charges:

*Assessed charges structures*

- (a) Standard assessed charge
- water consumption is assessed at 120 cubic metres per year
- (b) Single occupier assessed charge
- water consumption is assessed at 60 cubic metres per year;

*Applying assessed bands*

- (51) All properties eligible for an assessed charge will be charged the standard assessed charge unless the property is occupied by a single person, when the single occupier assessed charge will apply.



### 5.3 MEASURED WATER CHARGES

*Structure of measured charge*

- (52) The annual tariff for measured supplies shall be based on the Standard Measured Water Tariff as detailed in 5.3.1.

#### 5.3.1 Standard Measured Water Tariff

*Format of metered charges*

- (53) The standard measured annual tariff will consist of:
- (a) A fixed charge based on the size of the largest meter installed, plus;
  - (b) A volumetric charge made on the consumption recorded through each meter.

#### 5.3.2 WaterSure

*WaterSure*

- (54) Properties charged on the WaterSure scheme will be charged in the same way as the standard measured water tariff, as set out in section 5.3.1, however they will be charged no more than the average measured household bill.
- (55) The WaterSure scheme will be applied as set out in section 7.

#### 5.3.3 Leakage Allowances for Water

*Leakage allowances*

- (56) Any allowance for water lost through leakage will be in accordance with Northumbrian Water's Code of Practice on Leakage.

*Supply pipe repair*

- (57) Any leak on the private supply pipe is the owner/landlords responsibly to repair. If a stop tap installation/repair is required to allow the repair to the private supply pipe, the owner/landlord will not be responsible for the cost of the installation/repair of the stop tap and the provisions set out in paragraph 10.3.2 will apply.

#### 5.3.4 Allowance for Water Used for Firefighting Purposes

*Water for firefighting purposes*

- (58) Where it can be demonstrated that water has been used for firefighting purposes an allowance will be given against a customer's water bill. Any such claim should be made within 30 days of the date of issue of the bill.



## 6 SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL CHARGES

### 6.1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT SEWERAGE CHARGES

<i>Liability for charges</i>	(59) All customers, as defined in paragraph (9), are liable for Northumbrian Water's charge for sewerage and sewage disposal which is also referred to as a "sewerage charge" or "sewerage services charge".
<i>United Utilities and Hartlepool Water</i>	(60) As detailed in section 1, the charges for sewerage and sewage disposal services provided to properties within the water supply areas of United Utilities Water Ltd and Hartlepool Water plc are included on bills rendered by those Companies and are payable in accordance with the instructions issued by those Companies.
<i>Properties covered by the charge</i>	(61) Sewerage charges are payable in respect of every connected property whether this service, facility or right is in connection with foul and/or other discharges, including surface water and roof water drainage.  (62) If Northumbrian Water is of the view that the costs of billing and recovering charges will exceed the income from certain properties, then the charge may be waived for those properties.
<i>Sewerage services</i>	(63) There are two types of sewerage service, defined as follows:  (a) Foul sewage;  (b) Other discharges, including highway drainage, surface water drainage including water from roofs and external areas, residual discharges including infiltration etc. Other discharges will be referred to as Surface Water Drainage.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a property is not connected for surface water drainage section 6.4 will apply.</li> </ul>
<i>Types of customer</i>	(64) There are two classes of customer:  (a) The measured class, where charges for a property are made by reference to volume.  (i) Customers receiving and being charged for water supplies through a water abstraction licensed by the Environment Agency will be considered as a measured sewerage customer.  (b) The unmeasured class, which are all other properties.
<i>Levels of tariffs</i>	(65) The structure of charges applied in each case is set out in this section, and the level of each charge is detailed in Appendix A.
<i>Metered properties</i>	(66) All new properties will be required to be metered and charged on a measured basis.
<i>Changing to being charged on a measured basis</i>	(67) Unmeasured household customers may opt to have a meter installed, and be charged on a measured basis, under the optant programme detailed in Section 9.1.





- (68) Northumbrian Water may require some properties to have a meter installed, and be charged on a measured basis, as detailed under the selective metering programme as detailed in Section 9.2.

## 6.2 UNMEASURED SEWERAGE CHARGES

*Structure of unmeasured charge*

- (69) The annual tariff for unmeasured supplies shall be based on either;
- (a) the Standard Unmeasured Sewerage Tariff as detailed in 6.2.1 or;
  - (b) the Assessed Tariff as detailed in section 6.2.2.

### 6.2.1 Standard Unmeasured Sewerage Tariff

*Structure of unmeasured charge*

- (70) The annual tariff for unmeasured supplies to a connected property shall consist of;
- (a) A fixed charge, plus;
  - (b) A charge based on the rateable value of the property multiplied by a rate in the pound;
    - (i) The rateable value of the property is defined in section 5.2.2.
- (71) Charges for foul sewage, as defined in paragraph (63)(a) are divided between the fixed and rateable value elements.
- (72) Charges for other discharges, as defined in paragraph (63)(b), are recovered within the fixed charge.

*Properties connected for surface water drainage only*

- (73) For unmeasured properties connected for other discharges but not for foul sewage, a fixed charge will be made on the same basis as for measured properties, as defined in paragraph (79)(b).

### 6.2.2 Assessed Tariff for sewerage

*Applying assessed charges*

- (74) Where a property charged on an unmeasured basis has been deemed unmeterable by Northumbrian Water, in accordance with the metering policies set out in section 9, the customer will have a choice of having charges for their property based on the standard unmeasured charge or an assessed charge. The conditions surrounding this are set out in section 9.1.3 and 9.1.4.

*Assessed charges structures*

- (75) The assessed charges are a fixed annual charge based on assumed volumes of water consumption. There are two assessed charges:
- (a) Standard assessed charge
    - water consumption is assessed at 120 cubic metres per year
  - (b) Single occupier assessed charge
    - water consumption is assessed at 60 cubic metres per year;





*Applying assessed bands* (76) All properties eligible for an assessed charge will be charged the standard assessed charge unless the property is occupied by a single person, when the single occupier assessed charge will apply.

(77) Where a property is charged for water and sewerage services, the same assessed charge will apply for sewerage as that charged for water services.

### **6.3 MEASURED SEWERAGE CHARGES**

*Structure of measured charge* (78) The annual tariff for measured supplies shall be based on the Standard Measured Sewerage Tariff as detailed in 6.3.1.

#### **6.3.1 Standard Measured Sewerage Tariff**

*Structure of measured charge* (79) For the measured class of customer, the recovery of the costs associated with providing sewerage services is on the following basis:

(a) For foul sewage, a volumetric charge based on volume as determined under section 6.3.3.

(b) For other discharges, a fixed charge per household property will apply.

#### **6.3.2 WaterSure**

*WaterSure* (80) Properties charged on the WaterSure scheme will be charged in the same way as the standard measured water tariff, as set out in section 6.3.1, however they will be charged no more than the average household bill.

(81) The WaterSure scheme will be applied as set out in section 7.

#### **6.3.3 Determining the volume to charge for foul sewage**

(82) The volume of foul sewage to be charged as domestic strength will be calculated as:

(a) Volume of water entering a property;

(i) Volumes will be calculated by reference to the quantity of water registered on the water supply meter and/or water resource authorised licensed abstraction quantity;

*Calculating the volume of foul sewage to be charged* (b) Less any volume given as a non-return to sewer allowance as determined under section 6.3.4.

(83) The volumetric charge for foul sewage is made on the principle that water entering a property will equal water leaving a property, although it is accepted that a proportion of water supplied will not necessarily enter the sewer.

(84) A standard 5% non-return to sewer allowance is made within the calculation of the volumetric rate of charge, which is then applied to the total metered quantity of water for the period in question.

### 6.3.4 Non-return to sewer allowances

- Non-return allowance definition*
- (85) A non-return to sewer allowance is a reduction to the volume of domestic foul sewage charged, in addition to the standard 5% factored into the domestic foul sewage volumetric tariff.
- A non-return to sewer allowance is included in the calculation of the domestic foul sewage volume on each bill issued for the duration of the allowance.
- Non-return allowance criteria*
- (86) A non-return to sewer allowance may be given at Northumbrian Water's discretion where it can be demonstrated, to NWL's satisfaction, that:
- (a) there are losses of water in excess of the standard 5% non-return to sewer allowance due to processes carried on in the property;
  - (b) there is water that is not discharged to a public sewer or treatment works.
  - (c) there is recognised pre-treatment of waste water prior to discharge.
- Calculating non-return allowances*
- (87) The amount of non-return to sewer allowance granted is calculated by facts, estimates, engineering aspects and other formulae, as considered relevant by Northumbrian Water.
- For the purpose of this charge, the readings on any water meter or meters supplying the properties concerned shall be prima facie evidence of water entering connected properties.
- Start date for new non-return to sewer allowances*
- (88) The start date of a new non-return to sewer allowance will be the most recent date of:
- (a) 1 April in the charging year in which claim for the allowance is made to Northumbrian Water; or
  - (b) the date the premise was occupied by the occupier making the request for an allowance;
- Changes to non-return to sewer allowances*
- (89) Where there is an existing non-return to sewer allowance and the volume of water not returned to sewer changes, Northumbrian Water will determine, at its discretion, the date from which the changes will apply, taking into account the evidence available.
- Customers should inform Northumbrian Water immediately should any changes occur to their non-return to sewer volume.
- Renewing non-return to sewer allowances*
- (90) When a non-return to sewer allowance terminates, if there is no contact from the customer requesting a renewal within 12 months of the date of termination, any subsequent request for a non-return to sewer allowance for the same property will be treated as a new non-return to sewer allowance and applied as set out in paragraph (88).



### 6.3.5 Leakage Allowances for Sewerage

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Leakage allowances</i> | (91) A sewerage leakage allowance is a one-off reduction in the volume of domestic foul sewerage charged, following a water leak and is granted at Northumbrian Water's discretion in accordance with our Code of Practice on Leakage. |
| <i>Allowance dates</i>    | (92) The leakage allowance will be granted for a period commencing with the billing period prior to the billing period in which the leak came to Northumbrian Water's attention, and ending on the date the leak is repaired.          |

## 6.4 REDUCED CHARGES IN RELATION TO SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE

### 6.4.1 General

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Reduced charges where a property is not connected for surface water drainage</i> | (93) Where it can be demonstrated that no surface water or groundwater drains either directly or indirectly to Northumbrian Water's sewerage system, a reduced charge will be applied. The amount of reduction in the charge will be the same for all customers. The reduced charge is shown in Appendix A. |
|   | (94) Reduced charges will not be granted where volumes of surface water draining to Northumbrian Water's sewerage system have been significantly reduced.   |
| <i>No sewerage services</i>   | (95) Where a property is not connected for either foul sewage or for surface water drainage, no sewerage charges will be payable.   |

### 6.4.2 Application of Reduced Charges

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Date of application of reduced charges</i> | (96) Rebates as described in section 6.4.1 will be applied up to the later of the date on which the customer became responsible for charges or the date on which the site was disconnected from Northumbrian Water's systems. Rebates will be applied up to a maximum period of six years prior to the date on which the customer made an application for reduced charges. |
|---|--|

### 6.4.3 How to apply for reduced charges

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>Applying for reduced surface water drainage charges</i> | (97) Customers in this category who consider that they may qualify for reduced sewerage charges as a result of these provisions should either write or telephone in the first instance to:<br><br>Customer Centre<br>Northumbrian Water Limited<br>PO Box 300,<br>Durham<br>DH1 9WQ<br><br>Telephone: 0345 733 5566  |
|  | (98) Customers will be sent a questionnaire for completion. This will include the request for a simple site plan that indicates how the surface water and groundwater from their property is currently drained. This will help the customer to determine whether a claim under the provisions of this section is likely to be successful. If the customer remains of the opinion that they may be entitled to reduced sewerage charges, they should return the completed |



questionnaire to the above address. Northumbrian Water may require more detailed plans for some properties and reserves the right to visit any property to establish its connection status.

## 7 WATERSURE - CHARGES FOR VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS

### 7.1 GENERAL

(99) WaterSure is a scheme intended to assist customers who may use higher than average amounts of water and feel obliged to reduce their water consumption to very low levels in order to be able to pay their bill.

(100) Such customers will be those who;

- (a) are charged for water and sewerage services via a meter;
- (b) have low incomes and are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits for the WaterSure tariff listed below; and
- (c) use a higher than average amount of water due to a large family or a medical condition.

*Definition of  
WaterSure  
Scheme*

(101) The conditions that must be met to allow the WaterSure scheme to be applied are detailed in the remainder of this section.

(102) The conditions of the WaterSure scheme are defined by the Water Industry (Charges) (Vulnerable Groups) Regulations. A summary of the main points contained within the regulations are:

- (a) To be accepted onto the WaterSure scheme customers must apply and meet all required conditions.
  - The qualifying conditions are detailed in section 7.3.
  - The application process is detailed in section 7.6.
- (b) The WaterSure scheme caps charges for customers on the scheme. The maximum charge a Customer on the scheme will pay is equal to the average measured household charge. This is explained in section 7.2.

*Vulnerable group  
regulations*

### 7.2 WATERSURE CHARGES

(103) Customers on the WaterSure scheme will not be billed more than the average measured household bill. The amount billed depends on the volume of water used at the property and one of the following conditions will determine the amount to be billed:

- If, using standard tariffs, the charge would be higher than the average household bill, then the average household bill will be charged;
- If, using standard tariffs, the charge would be lower than the average household bill, then the lower amount will be billed.

*Level of  
WaterSure  
Scheme charge*

(104) The level at which charges will be capped is shown in Appendix A.

Where the comparison of measured and WaterSure scheme charges is based upon an estimated meter reading which is disputed by the customer,



Northumbrian Water may review this estimate or make arrangements with the customer to take an actual reading.

### 7.3 QUALIFYING CONDITIONS

#### 7.3.1 General Information

*Qualifying conditions*

(105) Qualifying conditions that must be met for the WaterSure scheme fall into several groups, there are conditions set upon the premises and the household occupying the premises. Both premises and household conditions must be met to qualify for the WaterSure scheme.

#### 7.3.2 Conditions for the premises

*Premises qualifying conditions*

(106) To qualify for the WaterSure scheme the premises must fulfil all the following requirements:

- (a) The premises must be occupied by the customer and any other qualifying person as their only or principal home;
- (b) Where premises are not used solely as a person's home, the other use must not be the principal use of the premises;
- (c) Water supplied to the premises must not be used for either:
  - (i) Watering a garden, other than by hand, by means of any apparatus;
  - (ii) Automatically replenishing a pond or swimming pool with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres.

#### 7.3.3 Conditions for the Household

*Large family qualifying conditions*

(107) To qualify for the WaterSure scheme the household must fulfil one of the following requirements:

- (a) For Large Families, both of the following conditions must be met:
  - (i) the household must contain an individual who is entitled to receive Child Benefit for three or more children up to the age of 19. All of these children must be resident in the property;
  - (ii) the individual entitled to receive Child Benefit for the three or more children must also be in receipt of one of the relevant benefits. Relevant benefits are listed in paragraph (108).

*Medical conditions qualifying conditions*

- (b) For Medical Conditions, both of the following conditions must be met:
  - (i) the household must contain an individual who has been diagnosed as suffering from one of the following medical conditions and whose condition causes them to use significant amounts of water:
    - Kidney failure requiring home dialysis (except where a contribution to the cost of the water consumed during the billing period has been made by the health authority);



- Abdominal stomas;
- Desquamation (flaky skin loss);
- Weeping skin disease (eczema, psoriasis, varicose ulceration);
- Incontinence;
- Crohn's disease;
- Ulcerative colitis;
- Renal failure requiring dialysis at home;
- Another medical condition which means they have to use a lot of extra water. Applications for this category must be supported by a doctor's certificate or letter.

(ii) the household must contain an individual, not necessarily the same individual as suffering from the qualifying medical condition, being in receipt of one of the relevant benefits. Relevant benefits are listed in paragraph (108).

(108) The relevant benefits are:

(a) Under Part VII of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992;

- Housing Benefit;
- Income Support;

(b) Under section 1(4) of the Jobseekers Act 1995;

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;

(c) Under the State Pension Credit Act 2002;

- State Pension Credit;

(d) Under Part 1 of the Tax Credits Act 2002;

- Child Tax Credit (except families in receipt of the family element or disability element only);
- Working Tax Credit (except in receipt of the disability element only);

(e) Under Part 1 of the Welfare Reform Act 2007;

- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;

(f) Under Part 1 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012;

- Universal Credit.

*Relevant Benefits*

#### **7.4 REQUIRED EVIDENCE OF ELIGIBILITY**

(109) To be billed on the WaterSure scheme, all applicants will be required in advance to complete an application form and to provide reasonable evidence of eligibility as detailed in paragraph (111), (112) or (113).

*Presentation of evidence*

(110) Evidence must be presented to Northumbrian Water in one of the following ways:





- (a) A copy included with the application form or emailed to our designated email address [WaterSure@nwl.co.uk](mailto:WaterSure@nwl.co.uk);
- (b) Claimants may present the notice of entitlement at any Northumbrian Water office. Northumbrian Water will make any photocopies of the documents as it feels necessary to validate the claim, but will not retain the originals.

(111) Large Families on low incomes as defined in (107)(a) must provide all the following:

*Evidence for large families*

- (a) a copy of the latest notice of entitlement (not more than 12 months old) showing that Child Benefit was payable to a resident of the property in respect of three or more children up to the age of 19;
- (b) a copy of the latest notice of entitlement to the relevant benefit listed in paragraph (108). The latest notice of entitlement must:
  - (i) for the tax credit, the award period must cover the date of the application;
  - (ii) for all other relevant benefits, be not more than 12 months old.

(112) For medical conditions as defined in (107)(b), applicants must provide all the following:

*Evidence for medical conditions*

- (a) customers will be required to state on the application form:
  - (i) The medical condition under which they are claiming eligibility;
  - (ii) The name of a medical practitioner to whom any enquiries may be made in connection with the application, to confirm both that the patient has been diagnosed as having the specified condition and the impact this is likely to have on water consumption;
- (b) a copy will be required of the latest notice of entitlement to the relevant benefit listed in paragraph (108). The latest notice of entitlement must:
  - (i) for the tax credit, the award period must cover the date of the application;
  - (ii) for all other relevant benefits, be not more than 12 months old.

(113) For medical conditions other than those defined in (107)(b), applicants must provide all the following:

*Evidence for other situations*

- (a) evidence as detailed for Medical Conditions as detailed in paragraph (112);
- (b) a doctor's certificate or letter from a GP or hospital consultant, stating:
  - the name of the person in respect of whom the diagnosis is made ("the patient");
  - the diagnosis of the patient's medical condition which obliges the patient to use a significant additional volume of water;
  - the date on which the certificate is given; and





- the name, position and address of the registered medical practitioner.

*Doctor's certificate costs*

(114) Northumbrian Water will not be responsible for any cost incurred in obtaining a doctor's certificate.

*Verification of eligibility*

(115) Northumbrian Water will take reasonable steps to ensure the validity of claims and may contact the agency providing the benefit or tax credit used as the basis for a claim and, where relevant, medical practitioners. It may do this both on a random basis and in specific cases where it has reason to doubt the validity of documents supplied by the applicant.

## 7.5 PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY

*Period of eligibility*

(116) Once eligibility has been established, the WaterSure scheme will be presumed to apply for the remainder of the current charging year.

(117) Eligibility for the WaterSure scheme will apply to the whole of the billing period within which the date of eligibility for the scheme begins or ends, as follows:

- Start of eligibility: the WaterSure scheme will apply from the beginning of the bill which covers the date on which eligibility starts.
- End of eligibility: the WaterSure scheme will apply until the end of the bill which covers the date on which eligibility ends.

(118) Eligibility will not be applied retrospectively, i.e. before the commencement of the billing period in which eligibility is established.

(119) If the customer's circumstances change during a year the customer must inform Northumbrian Water.

(120) Customers will be contacted annually to ask if their circumstances have changed. If they remain the same they will not need to do anything and they will remain eligible.

*Verification of eligibility*

(121) Northumbrian Water reserves the right to make additional checks on customers' continued eligibility during the charging year, both on a random basis and in cases where it has reason to believe that a customer's circumstances may have changed.

## 7.6 APPLYING FOR THE WATERSURE SCHEME

### 7.6.1 Administration of Applications

(122) Customers who feel they may be eligible for the WaterSure Scheme should in the first instance write or telephone for a leaflet and application form to:

*Application process*

Customer Centre  
Northumbrian Water Limited  
PO Box 300  
Durham  
DH1 9WQ  
Telephone: 0345 733 5566



- (123) On return of the completed application form, together with the relevant documentary evidence, Northumbrian Water will endeavour to process the application and advise customers of the outcome within 10 working days. However, it may be necessary to extend this timescale for factors outside Northumbrian Water's control, as noted below.
- (124) If additional evidence is required from third parties – for example, checking with a doctor – it may be necessary to exceed the target timescale, but the customer will be advised of any delay on this account.
- (125) If returned forms are incomplete or have been completed incorrectly, it may be necessary to return these to customers for correction and resubmission and this will delay the processing of the application. It may be possible to deal with minor errors and omissions by telephone and customers will be asked to provide a daytime contact number for this purpose. The failure by the customer to provide the appropriate documentary evidence in support of their claim will also result in delay.
- (126) During the course of the year, it is the customer's responsibility to advise Northumbrian Water immediately if their circumstances change such that they are (or believes they may) no longer be eligible for the WaterSure Scheme. In order to simplify this process for the customer, Northumbrian Water will, when it first notifies the customer of their eligibility and on subsequent occasions when it reconfirms eligibility, include a notification form for the customer to complete and return if and when they become (or believes they may have become) ineligible for continued access to the WaterSure Scheme.
- (127) Where it becomes clear that a customer's eligibility ceased in a billing period prior to the one then current and that this has resulted in undercharging, a retrospective adjustment to the customer's bills will be made.
- (128) In the event of a complaint or dispute over the application of the provisions for the protection for vulnerable customers, either as to eligibility or in the application of charges, customers should, in the first instance, contact the Customer Centre at the address shown above. In the event that the matter remains unresolved, the customer will have the right to refer their case to the Consumer Council for Water (CCW).

*Disputes over the  
WaterSure  
Scheme*



## 8 PAYMENT OF CHARGES

### 8.1 WHEN TO PAY CHARGES

#### 8.1.1 Unmeasured Customers

*Payment options  
(unmeasured  
customers)*

(129) The occupier of an unmeasured property is liable to pay water and sewerage charges for each day of their occupation. Bills are issued at the beginning of the financial year on the assumption that the occupier will remain in residence for the whole of the financial year. Charges are due in full on demand unless an alternative payment plan is agreed by Northumbrian Water. Customers may elect to pay their charges:

- (a) In two half-yearly payments on the due dates printed on the payment slips;
- (b) By our Instalment Scheme;
- (c) By our Budget Scheme (instalments can be monthly, fortnightly or weekly);
- (d) By special arrangements for customers having difficulty paying their bills.

#### 8.1.2 Measured Customers

*Payment options  
(measured  
customers)*

(130) Measured water, measured sewerage and fixed charges are payable in full on demand unless an alternative payment plan is agreed by Northumbrian Water. Customers may elect to pay their charges:

- (a) By our Budget Scheme (instalments can be monthly, fortnightly or weekly);
- (b) By special arrangements for customers having difficulty paying their bills.

#### 8.1.3 Payment by instalment

*Payment by  
Instalment*

(131) Where any arrangement has been made to pay a bill by instalment the following conditions apply:

*No charge for  
instalments*

- (a) No charge is made for the option to pay by instalments.

*All charges due  
on failure of  
payment*

- (b) Failure to pay an instalment by the due date causes all outstanding amounts to be due and payable immediately.

- (i) Failure to pay the charges outstanding in one amount may result in the issue of a County Court Claim for all unpaid charges.

#### 8.1.4 Customers entering into any formal insolvency procedure

*Charges when a  
formal insolvency  
procedure occurs*

(132) Where a Customer enters into any formal insolvency procedure, including Debt Relief Orders, Northumbrian Water may apportion any charges on a daily basis up to the date immediately before the date the relevant insolvency procedure becomes effective ('the insolvency date').

(133) Any apportioned charges after the insolvency date will be payable by the occupier of the property in question and apply from the next day of occupation after the insolvency date. Any such apportioned charges will not fall within the



insolvency procedure. The charges will be payable by the occupier on the same payment terms as would apply if the property had been newly connected on that day.

## 8.2 HOW TO PAY CHARGES

(134) All payment methods are free of charge unless otherwise stated.

(135) Unmeasured and measured customers who elect to pay their charges in accordance with either Section 8.1.1 or Section 8.1.2 above may use any (or any combination) of the payment methods listed below:

- (a) By Direct Debit – a choice of payment dates is available throughout the month;
- (b) By Internet - payment can be made online, either through a customer's own online banking facilities or via our web site address, [www.nwl.co.uk](http://www.nwl.co.uk);
- (c) By PayPoint - payment can be made in cash at any PayPoint agency;
- (d) Via a Bank – at a branch by cash or cheque, or through its online banking system. Free of charge at customer's own bank, and at branches of NatWest in the Northumbrian Water region. Other banks may make a charge for the transaction;
- (e) At a Post Office - by cash or debit card only, using the payment slip on the bill. (A charge will be made for payments via a Post Office);
- (f) By Post – by cheque or postal order, customers should send their payment to: Northumbrian Water, Customer Centre, PO Box 300, Durham, DH1 9WQ. Cheques and postal orders should be crossed and made payable to "Northumbrian Water Limited". Post-dated cheques are not acceptable;
- (g) By Telephone - to pay using a debit or credit card the customer should call the telephone number detailed on the bill.

*Available methods  
of payment*

*Payments by  
credit card*

(136) For payments made by credit card there will be no additional charge.

(137) In addition, Northumbrian Water can arrange to apply to the Jobcentre Plus/DWP to facilitate the receipt of payments via the Water Direct Scheme from the following benefits:

- (a) Income Support;
- (b) Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- (c) Income-based Jobseekers Allowance;
- (d) Pensions Credit;
- (e) Universal Credit.

*Water Direct  
Scheme*

## 8.3 PAYMENT BY LANDLORDS

*Payment by  
landlords*

(138) Subject to the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991 and except where provided by agreement with Northumbrian Water to the contrary, the charges



referred to in paragraph 8.1.1 and 8.1.2 are payable by the occupiers of properties. However, where a number of tenanted properties are in one ownership, the owner may agree to pay the charges in respect of all the properties. Northumbrian Water is therefore prepared to consider agreements with owners for the payment of unmeasured charges due on tenanted properties under which allowances may be given to reflect the administrative costs incurred by the Landlord in collecting and remitting the charges to Northumbrian Water, subject to payment on time.

- (139) Notwithstanding such arrangements, occupiers of properties remain the customers of Northumbrian Water, landlords being responsible for collecting charges due on the basis set out in this Charges Scheme.
- (140) In the event of the owner defaulting on the above arrangements, then the full charges may be recovered by Northumbrian Water from the occupier.
- (141) The arrangements referred to above also apply in respect of the sewerage and sewage disposal services charges levied by other water companies on behalf of Northumbrian Water. The water companies have their own arrangements related to their water supply charges.

#### **8.4 CUSTOMERS WHO STRUGGLE TO PAY THEIR CHARGES**

*Payment difficulties*

(142) Northumbrian Water will ensure that every attempt is made to work with the customer to secure a reasonable payment arrangement. Customers experiencing payment difficulties can contact Northumbrian Water to discuss alternative arrangements. Information can be obtained from the Customer Centre on 0345 733 5566.

(143) We encourage all customers experiencing difficulties to contact us to discuss their situation. We work with independent external agencies to help assess ability to pay bills and offer assistance, tailored to a customer's particular circumstances, where affordability issues have been identified.

(144) In particular we offer the following areas of assistance:

*Affordability schemes*

- (a) Different payments schedules, such as smaller more frequent payments;
- (b) Debt advice from independent third parties;
- (c) WaterSure (see section 7);
- (d) Payment matching schemes;
- (e) Debt prevention schemes;
- (f) Water efficiency advice.

(145) Northumbrian Water offers two social tariffs, which form part of the assistance we provide to customers who are struggling to pay their bills (covered under paragraph (144)). Customers should contact Northumbrian Water to discuss these schemes. These schemes are outlined below.

*Social tariffs*

- (a) SupportPlus Reduced Charges Scheme
  - (i) Our SupportPlus reduced charges scheme is there to help households on low incomes who find our bills unaffordable.



(ii) There are three ways of qualifying for this additional support, either;

- If your household income is less than £17,005 and your annual combined water and sewerage bill is greater than 3% of your total household income after housing costs (rent or mortgage payments) you will qualify for a reduction.
- We will calculate the level of your discount to reduce your annual bill to below 3% of your total household income after housing costs.
- The minimum discount will be 10% and this will increase in 10% bandings up to a maximum of 50% of your annual bill.
- Application for a reduction can be made every year and proof of income and housing costs is required.

Or;

- If your household income is not sufficient to cover your essential bills, we may be able to reduce your water bill. The reduction can be up to a maximum of 50% off your annual bill.
- In order to qualify you will need a financial assessment from an independent debt advice organisation, such as StepChange debt charity.
- Application for a reduction can be made every year and proof of income is required.

Or;

- If you are in receipt of pension credits.

(iii) You must continue to pay the agreed amounts in order to continue to qualify for the reduction.

#### (b) SupportPlus Debt Support

(i) If you owe NWL more than 2 years' worth of charges, you may be eligible for our SupportPlus scheme. We will agree a 2 year payment plan, and if you keep to it, we will write off a proportion of the historic debt.

(ii) This is a once only opportunity per customer, and we will maintain regular contact with you during the 2 years that the scheme runs so that you can see how your debt is reducing.

(iii) This scheme requires an independent debt advice organisation, such as StepChange, to undertake an independent financial assessment to determine eligibility.

(c) We provide a range of tariffs which provide extra help to customers under our SupportPlus scheme. We review our tariffs annually to make sure they are fair and reflect the best way to support customers who are struggling to pay – this includes talking to and involving customers in what our future tariffs should look like.





## 8.5 COLLECTION OF OUTSTANDING CHARGES

(146) When payments are not made, either following the standard payment arrangements or an agreed payment arrangement, debt collection procedures will apply. Full details of our collection procedures are contained within our Code of Practice on Debt, a copy of which can also be obtained from the Customer Centre.

(147) Unmeasured bills are issued annually. Measured bills are issued on a six monthly basis. If the bill has not been paid, a reminder notice is sent advising the customer that recovery action will ensue.

(148) If payment is not forthcoming, a pre-claim letter is issued. The pre-claim letter advises that if the current instalment due is not paid, legal action will be taken for the full amount outstanding which, in the case of unmeasured charges will be the balance to the end of the financial year. In addition to this amount, the customer will incur charges in respect of County Court Fees and Solicitors' Costs. If payment is still not received, Northumbrian Water may attempt to make contact with the customer before a claim is sent to the County Court and Court Fees and Solicitors' Costs are added to the customer's account.

*Consequence of non-payment*

(149) The customer has the option to either admit or defend the claim. If the customer admits the debt, the Court is asked to enter judgment by admission. If the claim is defended and the query cannot be resolved by correspondence a Hearing may be set by the Court who will act as arbitrator in the case. If the customer ignores the claim the Court is requested to enter judgment by default. If the customer does not adhere to the terms of the County Court judgment order, Northumbrian Water will request enforcement in accordance with County Court rules.

(150) At each stage in the process Northumbrian Water will encourage customers to enter into an appropriate payment arrangement and facilitate the means of payment to suit the customer's individual circumstances.

## 8.6 OTHER PAYMENT CONDITIONS

(151) Northumbrian Water reserves the right to recover bank charges and administrative costs resulting from invalid or dishonoured cheques, standing orders, credit cards or direct debits.

*Payment charges*

(152) When payment is made in foreign currency, the exchange rate applicable will be that on the day of receipt of payment. Any shortfall or benefit will be debited or credited to the customer's account accordingly. Commission charges will be deducted from the amount paid.





## 9 METERS AND METERING

### 9.1 OPTIONAL METERING

#### 9.1.1 General Information

*Right to a free water meter*

(153) Under the Water Industry Act 1999, all household customers have the right to request that a meter be fitted to their supply at no direct charge to themselves. Details of Northumbrian Water's current Optional Metering Scheme are available on our website or customers can call 0345 733 5566. An application form will be provided for the customer to complete if they wish to proceed. The receipt by Northumbrian Water from the customer of a completed application form will serve as a measured charges notice.

*Rights of tenants in relation to metering*

(154) Section 209a of the Water Industry Act gives the tenant, on a periodic tenancy greater than 6 months, the unfettered right to request a meter and the landlord cannot limit that right in the tenancy agreement or otherwise.

*Preferred locations for water meters*

(155) The preferred location for the meter installation is in an existing boundary box. If an existing boundary box is not available, the water meter will normally be fitted in Northumbrian Water's next preferred location according to Northumbrian Water's meter location policy in force at the time of installation.

*Timescale for installing optional meters*

(156) If a customer requests the meter to be fitted in an alternative location which is acceptable to Northumbrian Water, the customer may be asked to bear any resulting additional costs reasonably incurred thereby as compared to installation in Northumbrian Water's preferred location, which can be obtained by contacting Northumbrian Water.

(157) Optional meters will normally be fitted within 90 days of receiving a customer's confirmation of their wish to proceed with the installation. Where this period is exceeded, the customer's bills will be calculated as though the meter had been installed by the due date. As such a zero volume will be charged until the bill following the first meter reading.

#### 9.1.2 When A Meter Cannot Be Installed

*Exceptions to installing optional meters*

(158) Northumbrian Water will endeavour to fit a meter to a supply whenever requested to do so. However, in some cases this may not be possible, either because it would involve unreasonable cost or is in any case not technically feasible.

*Reasonable costs for installing an optional water meter*

(159) The reasonable costs associated with the installation of a meter include:

- Provision of a meter;
- The cost of installation in the preferred location or another normal location (see paragraph (155));
- Normal reinstatement costs;
- The provision of any remote reading device where Northumbrian Water considers this is necessary;
- In some circumstances, usually associated with multi-occupied dwellings, the installation of a second meter.



(160) Conversely, unreasonable costs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

*Unreasonable costs for installing an optional water meter*

- The cost of separating the customer's supply pipe where this is shared with other customers;
- The cost of material alterations to existing plumbing;
- The cost of installing more than one meter, in circumstances other than those referred to above.

(161) If the installation of a meter is refused on grounds of unreasonable cost or infeasibility, the customer will be given a survey report that details the reasons for refusal and, where appropriate, indicates the alterations that would first be required either to the customer's property or to the nature of their water supply in order for the application for the installation of a meter at no cost to be successful.

*Survey reports*

### 9.1.3 Cases when Assessed Charges may be applied

(162) If the customer declines to make such alterations as may be required to enable an optional meter to be installed internally, the customer can opt to have an external meter installed as per the standard charges (217) if this is technically feasible. If the installation of a meter is infeasible in any case, the customer will be given the choice either of remaining on their existing unmeasured charge or on an assessed charge as set out in sections 5.2.3 and 6.2.2.

*Assessed Charges*

(163) Where an assessed consumption charge is based upon the property being a single person household, it is the customer's responsibility to inform Northumbrian Water immediately if this is no longer the case. In the event that any revised assessed charge exceeds the alternative unmeasured charges based on rateable value the customer may revert to the latter.

*Notification in change of circumstance*

(164) Where a customer chooses to pay on the basis of an assessed consumption charge, Northumbrian Water reserves the right to reassess from time to time the feasibility of fitting a meter to the property. In the event that on such an occasion Northumbrian Water determines that a meter may now be fitted at no direct cost to the customer, assessed consumption charges will no longer apply and the customer must agree either that the meter installation proceed or to revert to normal unmeasured charges, based upon rateable value. If the customer agrees to the installation of a meter, they will subsequently have the same right to revert to an unmeasured basis of charge as provided for other household meter optants in paragraph (166).

*Reassessment of properties deemed unmeterable at reasonable cost*

### 9.1.4 Reversion To the Standard Unmeasured Tariff

(165) When a customer vacates a property which is charged an assessed charge the property will revert to normal unmeasured charges, based upon rateable value. The new occupier will have the right to apply for an optional meter and the feasibility of the property for metering will be reassessed.

*Automatic reversion of assessed charges to unmeasured charges*

(166) Subject to the provisions of the Optional Metering Scheme, the owner or occupier of a property may only revert from a metered water supply to an unmetered supply if the request for reversion is made up to one month

*Reversion to unmeasured charges at customers request*



following the issue by Northumbrian Water of sufficient bills to enable consumption over the 24 months following the meter installation to be properly evaluated. In the event of a change of ownership or occupancy within this period, the right to revert to an unmeasured basis of charge will not transfer to subsequent owners or occupiers and charges will remain on a measured basis.

(167) Our Lowest Bill Guarantee is designed to help you have confidence that you won't be charged more if you think you will save money with a water meter. If after assessing your water use you believe you will save money and apply for a free water meter, we guarantee that if your new water meter charges are higher than your unmeasured charges would have been, you will be charged the lower amount. The guarantee lasts for two years from the date that the meter is installed. At any time during this two year period you can decide to revert to an unmeasured basis of charge (see paragraph (166)).

(168) If a property is covered by the selective metering policy, as described in section 9.2, then charges will continue to be levied on a measured basis.

*Meter status on reversion of charges at customers request*

(169) Where an owner or occupier has reverted to an unmeasured basis of charge the meter will remain in place and on future change of owner or occupier charges will be raised on a metered basis.

*Reversion to unmeasured charges*

(170) In all other circumstances, once a supply has been charged by meter, the charges for that supply will not revert to an unmeasured basis of charge.

*Charging for further reversion back to metered charges*

(171) If, following reversion to an unmeasured supply as provided in paragraph (166), the original applicant again requests that the supply to their property be charged on a measured basis, a charge will be made equal to that for a mid-term meter reading. In no circumstances will further reversion to unmeasured charges be allowed.

### 9.1.5 Right Of Appeal

*Right of appeal*

(172) Where Northumbrian Water refuses to offer to install a meter free of charge, in a location as per the current policy, the customer will have the right to have their case determined by the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat).

## 9.2 SELECTIVE METERING

(173) It is our policy to meter the following categories of household property;

*Selective metering policy for household properties*

- (a) All new properties, including any connection to be used wholly or partially for supplying water for firefighting purposes.
- (b) Properties where water is used in significant quantities for discretionary purposes, including:
  - For garden watering, other than by hand-held apparatus. This includes the use of sprinklers;
  - For the automatic replenishing of ponds or swimming pools with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres.



(c) Where there has been a change in the occupation of a property and no charges have yet been demanded from the person who has become the occupier.

*Notification of cases where selective metering applies*

(174) Customers will be required to notify Northumbrian Water if they are using water for any of the purposes mentioned in paragraph (173)(173)(b), arrangements will be then made to fit a meter at no cost to the customer. Unmeasured bills will draw attention to the requirement for such uses to be charged by meter.

*Charging during the change over between unmeasured and measured charges*

(175) If a property becomes metered as a result of Northumbrian Water's selective metering programme, metered charges, based on the new meter, will commence from the date of installation. Once the meter has been installed Northumbrian Water will raise a backdated charge covering the date of occupation to the date of installation. This charge will be calculated using the previous unmetered charge.

*Supplementary Charges*

(176) Where properties have characteristics that would normally require selective metering but the installation of a meter would incur unreasonable cost or is in any case infeasible, in addition to normal unmeasured charges, supplementary charges for sprinklers, ponds and swimming pools will apply, where relevant.

### 9.3 INFORMATION ABOUT METERS

*Preferred locations for water meters*

(177) The preferred location for the meter installation is in an existing boundary box. If an existing boundary box is not available, the water meter will normally be fitted in Northumbrian Water's next preferred location according to Northumbrian Water's meter location policy in force at the time of installation.

(178) The water meter and any remote reading device, if fitted, are the property of Northumbrian Water.

*Ownership of meters and remote reading devices*

(a) Northumbrian Water shall be responsible for the maintenance of the meter.

(b) Where a meter has been fitted either internally or externally within the boundary of the customer's property, the customer must allow Northumbrian Water or its representatives reasonable access for the purposes of reading the meter, maintaining it and replacing it when necessary. The customer will have a duty of care in respect of the meter and meter chamber in these circumstances.

(c) If the meter is installed other than within the boundary of a customer's property, the maintenance, access and safety of the meter will solely be the responsibility of Northumbrian Water.

*Accuracy of meters*

(179) In respect of the accuracy of meters, testing of meters, expenses of testing, method of proof and effect of meter reading, notice of vacation and liability for charges, and offences of tampering with meters, the requirements of the Water Industry Act 1991 and the Water (Meters) Regulations 1988, will apply.

*Tampering with meters*

(180) It is an offence to tamper with or remove a water meter without the express permission of Northumbrian Water (see section 175 and 176 of the Water Industry Act). Northumbrian Water reserves the right to charge a customer



should their meter or remote reading device be removed or tampered with in any way.

*Changing meters by Northumbrian Water*

(181) Northumbrian Water may exchange an existing meter for one of a different size, if in its view this is more appropriate to a customer's circumstances. No charge will be made for this.

*Changing meters at the customer's request*

(182) Where a customer asks for an existing meter to be replaced with a meter of different size or requests the meter and/or its associated remote reading device be relocated, Northumbrian Water will relocate the meter within the limits of its meter location policy and make an appropriate charge to cover the costs of such change. No charge will be made where the meter and/or remote reading device relocation is requested to facilitate meter reading for elderly or disabled customers.

*Monitoring leakage*

(183) Northumbrian Water reserves the right to adjust charges to metered properties in areas where unmeasured water use is monitored for leakage purposes, to maintain an appropriate monitoring system.

#### **9.4 METER READING AND BILLING**

*Meter reading frequency and estimated bills*

(184) Meter readings will be taken at such intervals as Northumbrian Water may determine. On occasions when Northumbrian Water does not obtain an actual reading, an account may be rendered on the basis of estimated consumption.

*Definition of 'actual reading'*

(185) An 'actual meter reading' means any reading taken directly from a meter or supplied by any remote reading device associated with a meter.

*Amendment of estimated bill*

(186) Estimated bills will be amended on the basis of a meter reading supplied by the customer, unless there is reason to doubt the accuracy of this. In the latter case, Northumbrian Water will endeavour to make an appointment to re-visit the property to take a meter reading and, if necessary, check the accuracy of the meter.

*Billing periods*

(187) When a measured bill is raised for a period that commences before 1 April and ends on or after 1 April, the charges shall be apportioned into sub-periods on a daily basis between the start of the period covered by the bill and 31 March and the period from 1 April until the end of the period covered by the bill. Each sub-period so apportioned will then be charged at the tariffs of the relevant charging year.





## 10 MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

(188) Northumbrian Water provides water and sewerage services to our customers, and recovers the costs for these services, on an average basis across all our customers through the standard published charges set out in this Charges Scheme.

*Defining miscellaneous charges*

(189) Where there are services that we carry out for individual customers, we recover the costs for these activities through the Miscellaneous Charges.

(190) The types of Miscellaneous Charge, and when they apply are described in this section.

### 10.2 CONDITIONS APPLYING TO MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

(191) The standard charges quoted apply for works carried out during normal working hours on normal working days under standard conditions, see paragraph (9)(m). In other instances Northumbrian Water reserves the right to charge on a basis of actual costs, provided the applicant is notified accordingly prior to commencement of the work.

*Charges for normal working hours*

(192) Payments for charges in this section may be required in advance unless specified to the contrary.

*Payment*

(193) All charges published in this section **exclude** VAT unless specified otherwise. VAT will be added to the published charge at the appropriate rate where required.

*VAT*

(194) Additional charges may be made for traffic management expenses.

*Traffic Management Act*

(195) In accordance with Section 45(6A) Water Industry Act 1991 any dispute between Northumbrian Water and any other person as to the charge in this section may be referred to the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) for determination.

*Disputes*

(196) In accordance with normal business practice, Northumbrian Water can require, under certain circumstances normally associated with new development, the provision of cash bonds or deposits to secure the provision of services.

*Bonds and Deposits*

(197) In respect of any service performed, facility provided or right made available by Northumbrian Water for which a charge is not applicable elsewhere in this scheme, Northumbrian Water may make such charges as it determines appropriate, having regard to the cost of performing the service, providing the facility or making the right available. Payment of such charges may be required in advance, unless specified to the contrary.

*Charges for additional services*



### 10.3 ATTENDANCE ON SITE BY NWL TECHNICIANS AT CUSTOMER REQUEST

#### 10.3.1 Technician Call Out Charge

(198) NWL will charge for a technician to attend a site or property the same day or outside of normal working hours to provide advice or take action to resolve an issue caused by a customer or third party. If the technician is unable to resolve the problem and an additional visit is required to complete the work, then a further attendance charge will be applied.

(199) There will be a charge if the issue can be fixed by, or has been caused by, the customer or a third party.

(200) When attendance charges apply, payment will be secured in advance at the point of contact, with payment for charges relating to any additional work to be collected after completion of the work.

(201) Charges per visit are as follows:

(a) During Normal Working Hours (08.00-16.00 Mon-Fri only):

(i) Minimum of two hours (inclusive of travelling time to the incident):	£75.43
--	--------

(b) Outside Normal Working Hours and Public Holidays:

(i) Monday to Friday 06:00 to 08:00 and 16:00 to 22.00 and Saturday 06:00 to 22:00 a 50% uplift to Normal Working Hours Rate will apply. Minimum of two hours (inclusive of travelling time to the incident):	£113.15
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(ii) Monday to Saturday 22:00 to 06:00, Sundays and Bank Holidays a 100% uplift to the Normal Working Hours rate will apply. Minimum of 2 hours (inclusive of travelling time to the incident):	£150.87
---	---------

(c) Additional hourly charge for each subsequent hour or part hour will be charged at the applicable rate.

(202) If a repair team is subsequently required, all work carried out by them will be in addition to the Technician fixed charge above at actual cost inclusive of overheads excepting where it is covered by the fixed cost work covered elsewhere in these charges, (additional costs could include plant, equipment, hire charges, contractor charges, reinstatement of surfaces and fittings etc.).

At cost

#### 10.3.2 Installation, renewal, operation and repair of stop tap valves

(203) Where a domestic customer requests a visit from a Technician to restore the supply of water to a property using a company stop tap, no charge will be made for this service during normal working hours.

(204) Other than in connection with our supply pipe leakage policy as described in paragraph (57), where there is no existing stop tap and the customer requests that





one be installed, the customer may be required to pay the cost of installation according to paragraph (205).

(205) Standard charge to install, renew or repair a stop tap valve belonging to Northumbrian Water where the customer or a third party specifically requests this or causes damage to the existing stop tap:

(a) During normal working hours:

- |                          |         |
|--------------------------|---------|
| (i) No reinstatement:    | £362.00 |
| (ii) With reinstatement: | £454.00 |

(b) Outside normal working hours:

- |                          |         |
|--------------------------|---------|
| (i) No reinstatement:    | £429.00 |
| (ii) With reinstatement: | £522.00 |

### 10.3.3 Connection of Customers Relaid Supply Pipe

(206) Where supply pipe is laid on behalf of the customer:

- |                         |         |
|-------------------------|---------|
| (a) No excavation:      | £158.00 |
| (b) No reinstatement:   | £336.00 |
| (c) With reinstatement: | £430.00 |

### 10.3.4 Other Activities

(207) Attendance for commercial activities during normal working hours (tank filling, flow and pressure tests on the network, leakage advice etc.) will be charged at the rates shown in section 10.3.1.

(208) In addition any water used will be charged the standard volume rate:

- Per cubic metre: £1.2381

## 10.4 DAMAGE TO NORTHUMBRIAN WATER APPARATUS

(209) Where damage to Northumbrian Water apparatus has occurred, charges will be made to repair the equipment.

(210) Repairs to Northumbrian Water apparatus will be carried out by Northumbrian Water staff or approved contractors.

(211) All charges will be based on actual costs inclusive of overheads excepting where it is covered by the fixed cost work covered elsewhere in these charges (additional costs could include plant, equipment, hire charges, contractor charges, reinstatement of surfaces and fittings, etc.).

At cost



## 10.5 CLEANING AND BLOCKAGE CLEARANCE OF PRIVATE DRAINS AND SEWERS

(212) When Northumbrian Water cleans or removes blockages from private drains or sewers, Northumbrian Water may make the following charges:

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| (a) During normal working hours (08:00 – 20:00 Mon to Fri):  | £161.00 |
| (b) Outside normal working hours (20:00 – 08:00 Mon to Fri, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays): | £210.30 |

(213) In exceptional circumstances, Northumbrian Water reserves the right to make additional charges.	At cost
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## 10.6 METERS

(214) Various activities relating to installation, maintenance and renewal of meters may be subject to a charge. Where a charge will be made is set out in this section.

### 10.6.1 Meter testing

(215) A standard charge will be made, as set out below, where a meter test is carried out in accordance with the Water (Meters) Regulations 1988 at the request of the customer and the meter on being tested falls within the prescribed limits of error. Such testing will normally require the removal of the meter from the customer's premises.

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| (a) Meters up to 40mm (including VAT): | £70.00  |
| (b) All other meters:                  | At cost |

### 10.6.2 Reading of meters

(216) For any meter readings carried out by Northumbrian Water at the request of the customer, which are additional for the standard planned meter reading timetable, charges will be made as follows:

- |                                      |        |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| (a) Privately owned meters:          | £49.60 |
| (b) Northumbrian Water owned meters: | £49.60 |

- This charge will not be made for customers who are disabled or in receipt of state pension.

### 10.6.3 Meter installation

(217) Installation of New, Optant or Selective Meter in a location other than that defined by Northumbrian Water's Meter Location Policy:

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| (a) Private side external installation requested and is possible, and internal fit is also possible | £172.00 |
|---|---------|



(b) Public side external installation requested and is possible, internal fit is also possible	£341.00
(218) Change of Meter Size at Customer's Request:	Price on Application
(219) All Other Situations	
(a) All other situations for installation or modification of meters on existing supplies will be charged at cost/on a fixed price quotation basis that has previously been notified to the customer unless specified otherwise.	At cost

## 10.7 BILLING

(220) Payment by credit card	
(a) For payments made by credit card there will be no additional charge.	
(221) Consequence Of Non-Payment Of Account	
(a) Where payments fail this requires intervention by Northumbrian Water to resolve the payment and a charge will be made for this activity in the following cases:	
(i) Cheque payments that have to be referred back to the account holder:	£21.45
(ii) Unpaid Direct Debit / Credit Card transactions:	£6.25
(222) Requests for non-standard bills	
(a) Where customers or their representatives request copies of bills and/or a statement of charges covering a number of previous charging periods, for example, for the purpose of completing returns to HM Revenue & Customs or providing information to accountants, charges will be made as follows:	
(i) Requests for copies of previously issued bills (up to 10 bills per charge)	£18.90
(ii) Statement of charges (per statement)	£38.45
(iii) Request for separate bills for water and sewerage services (per bill)	At cost

## 10.8 OTHER SERVICES

(223) Other services as listed below are available from Northumbrian Water. Charges for these services can be found on our website, on request from Northumbrian Water or in a separate leaflet entitled: "Charges Scheme 2023/24: Other Services".

(224) The available other services are:

- Standpipes
- Supply of Water from Northumbrian Water Depots
- Disposal Of Septic Tank And Cesspool Contents



- 
- Water Regulation Inspections
  - Treatment of Tankered Industrial Effluents
  - Fire Hydrants



**APPENDIX A HOUSEHOLD CHARGES 2023/24**

	Water	Sewerage (charges from one of these options will apply to each property)		
		foul and surface water drainage	Foul only	surface water drainage only
<b><u>Unmeasured Supplies</u></b>				
<u>Properties charged as standard</u>				
Fixed Charge per property per year	£114.47	£128.67	£69.87	£94.73
plus RV Charge per £rateable value	£0.6848	£0.7199	£0.7199	
<u>Properties charged on an assessed basis</u>				
Standard Assessed Charge per property per year	£170.68	£203.41	£144.61	£94.73
Single Occupier Assessed Charge per property per year	£96.88	£149.11	£90.31	£94.73
Supplementary charges				
Swimming pool - circulating	£81.06			
Swimming pool – non-circulating	£190.59			
Sprinkler	£42.44			
<b><u>Measured Supplies</u></b>				
<u>Properties charged as standard</u>				
Standing Charge per meter by meter size per year:				
0-24mm	£45.09			
25-34mm	£60.49			
35-39mm	£79.80			
40-49mm	£98.99			
50-64mm	£214.49			
65mm and larger	£599.49			
Plus Fixed Charge for Sewerage per property per year:		£88.32	£29.56	£88.32
Plus Volume Charge per cubic metre	£1.2381	£0.9841	£0.9841	
<u>Properties on the WaterSure scheme</u>				
Level at which bills are capped	£162.81	£173.16	£173.16	£173.16
<b><u>Charges relating to Payment Methods</u></b>				
Discounts for payments made by Direct Debit or Water Direct	-£0.00	-£0.00	-£0.00	-£0.00
Charges paid by Credit Card	No additional charge	No additional charge	No additional charge	No additional charge

