

# You can't lose!

With our lowest bill guarantee, we promise that you won't pay more with a meter

**Water meter application pack 2024/2025**

# Pay less for your water services

Thousands of customers switch to a water meter each year with the majority saving at least £100 a year compared to their rateable value bills.

The great news is that we fit meters for **free** and our **lowest bill guarantee** means that you'll never be worse off with a meter during your two year trial.

## Making a saving has never been easier!

Our lowest bill guarantee works like this. Each time we send you a water bill, we'll automatically check your meter charges against what you would have paid on your old rateable value bill and always charge you whatever is the lower amount. So you'll never be out of pocket!

Our lowest bill guarantee lasts for two years, after which you can decide to go back to your old rateable value bills if you've not made a saving. There's really no risk when switching to a meter!

Our preference is always to fit the meter inside your home where it's not on view – these days we use remote technology and we don't have to enter your house and disturb you to read the meter. The good thing about having the meter indoors is that it's easier for you to take your own readings so you can monitor your water usage.

Sometimes, we may need to do a bit of minor joinery to fit your meter snugly in its new home. Don't worry, we'll always check with you first before doing any work of this nature.

If, for whatever reason, we can't fit the meter inside your home, we'll see if it's possible to fit it in the footpath.

### **Meter defater**

Occasionally, it's not possible to fit a water meter at all. For example, if you share your water supply with other properties, you have more than one supply of water to your property or your pipework is not suitable.

If we can't fit a water meter at your home we will review your account to see if it's a cheaper option for you to pay

your water and wastewater services based on an assessed charge, which is a fixed amount per year. The amount you pay depends on the type of property you live in, unless you are eligible for our single person tariff or our pensioner tariff. If this is the case will arrange for your tariff to be updated and send you a revised bill.

If your existing pipework is not currently suitable for a meter, you have the option to arrange for your own plumber to make changes to the pipework to allow us to fit a meter.

If you have or intend to carry out any renovations to your property now or in the future, it is worth talking to us again as sometimes changes made during renovations may mean that we are able to fit a meter to your new or altered pipework.

## **Take our online 'splash the cash' challenge!**

Go to our website and try our instant online calculator. It will estimate your potential annual savings with a water meter. It only takes a few minutes to complete, and you could be surprised by how much you might save.

[unitedutilities.com/meters](https://unitedutilities.com/meters)



# Family fortunes

If you have a small family, live alone or are a couple, a water meter could well prove a winner.

Even if you have a large family, it's worth checking if you might benefit from a meter - especially if your current fixed bill is high due to your home having a high rateable value.

Remember, our lowest bill guarantee means you won't be worse off during your two year trial and if you don't make a saving you can switch back to your fixed bill - you can't lose!

## Take a look at these households. Which one is closest to home?

### Katie

31 year-old Katie recently moved into her first home. She lives alone, and she takes showers, not baths (no time!) and doesn't have a garden – unless you count a window box with wilting herbs! Her fixed water bill for this year is £540.



Likely to save with a water meter?  
**YES**

Possible savings of around:  
**£191 per year**

### Kathryn & Brian

Retired couple Kathryn and Brian have been living in their leafy bungalow for 11 years. Their children have long since flown the nest, but their three grandchildren, and immaculately tended garden keep them more than busy. They use a water butt to keep their flowers blooming. Their fixed water bill for this year is £850.



Likely to save with a water meter?  
**YES**

Possible savings of around:  
**£331 per year**

### The Wangs

Steve and Li Wang couldn't be prouder of their baby girl. With nappies, night feeds and CBeebies currently dominating their lives, they've precious little time to think about their utility bills, or saving water for that matter. That's sure to change in time, especially as the overheads on their semi are high. Their fixed water bill for this year is £730.



Likely to save with a water meter:  
**SMALL SAVINGS POSSIBLE**

Possible savings of around:  
**£91 per year**

### The Hendersons

The Hendersons are an all-action family of four (five if you include Jojo the dog). When they're not all mountain-biking together in the Lake District, mum and dad are ferrying son Max and daughter Alice to football practice and street dance class. Needless to say, the washing machine and dishwasher never stop at their house. Their fixed water bill for this year is £750.



Likely to save with a water meter:  
**UNLIKELY**

See if you can make a saving with our lowest bill guarantee - see page 2 for details



# Your bill

**We normally read water meters once every six months and bill our customers on those readings. You can expect your first new bill to drop through the letterbox anytime within six months of your meter being fitted.**

Your bill will show the meter reading that has been used to calculate your charges. If for any reason we've been unable to read your meter, we will leave a card explaining what to do. An actual reading taken either by you or one of our meter readers will make sure you receive a more accurate bill.

If we owe you any money from your old account, we'll knock it off your first metered bill. And if you owe us anything, we'll send you a bill to settle up. All this will happen automatically.

You can continue to pay in the way that suits you best, including Direct Debit at your bank, or by post. And if you sign up for our My Account service, this is even easier (visit [unitedutilities.com/myaccount](https://unitedutilities.com/myaccount) for full details).

# Switching back

**The vast majority of our customers never look back once they get a water meter.**

Remember, with our lowest bill guarantee we promise that for the first two years you won't pay any more than you do now. And if you've not made a saving during the trial, you can switch back to your old rateable value bills. So you've really got nothing to lose by applying for a meter.

## A bit of a clever clogs!

Your meter may not be able to make the tea or series link your favourite TV programme, but it can send readings to us automatically without us having to enter your home to get an accurate meter reading (although we may need access to the meter to maintain or replace it at any time in the future).

And don't forget, you can also take your own meter readings to monitor your water usage.



### Give us a smile!

Customers who switch to a meter are a happy bunch as they're making a saving on their water bills.



## Wait a mo... did you know?

**A lot of the water we use in the home is heated** by gas or electricity (such as baths, showers and washing up). So any water savings you make should reduce your energy bills too. Who says water and electricity don't mix?

**Simple changes to your daily routine** can really help to drive down your bill with a meter. Visit [unitedutilities.com/savewater](https://unitedutilities.com/savewater) for lots of hints and tips. You can also order free stuff from us at our website to help you get started!

## Try it for up to two years... change back if you don't like it

If you find that you've not made a saving with a water meter, you can switch back to your old fixed bill within the first 24 months. You've really got nothing to lose with our lowest bill guarantee as you'll never pay more than you do now during your two year trial and any savings you do make are yours to keep!

# We install water meters free of charge, and applying for one couldn't be easier.

You can:



**Call:** ring us on **0345 072 6065** and we'll do the rest



**Click:** apply online at [unitedutilities.com/myaccount](https://unitedutilities.com/myaccount)



**Post:** fill out the application form included with this leaflet



# To apply for a water meter:

- Complete the enclosed application form
- Alternatively call us on **0345 072 6065** so we can book an appointment over the phone
- You can also log in to your account at **[unitedutilities.com/myaccount](https://unitedutilities.com/myaccount)** and apply for a meter online

## Other leaflets that may be of interest:

- Testing your household water meter
- A summary of our household charges
- A guide to our Priority Services
- A guide to using water wisely
- Support with your water bill
- Our complaints procedure
- Replacing lead and common supply pipes
- Our standards of service

You can download any of our leaflets from our website: [unitedutilities.com/leaflets](https://www.unitedutilities.com/leaflets), or write to:

United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington WA55 1WB.

## In case you need to contact us:



### To talk to us about your bill:

**0345 672 2888** if you don't have a water meter  
**0345 672 2999** if you have a water meter

For opening hours please visit [unitedutilities.com/contactus](https://www.unitedutilities.com/contactus) where you can also get in touch with us online.

### To talk to us about your water and wastewater services: 0345 672 3723

Opening hours: for emergencies we are open 24 hours.

You can also call this number to check the identity of one of our representatives.

If you have hearing or speech difficulties, and use a textphone, please dial **18001** followed by the number you require.



### You can go online:

Visit our website and click on 'Live chat' to webchat with a member of our team or go to [unitedutilities.com/contactus](https://www.unitedutilities.com/contactus)



### Or write to us at:


United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington WA55 1WB





### Translations

Choose your preferred language on our website by clicking on 'Accessibility help'.





### Follow us on social media

 @OfficialUnitedUtilities

 @unitedutilities

### Download our app

Search **United Utilities** on the App Store or Google Play to download.



### Manage your account online



Register for My Account and you can pay your bill, update your details, provide a meter reading and switch to paperless.

[unitedutilities.com/myaccount](https://www.unitedutilities.com/myaccount)



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Registered in England and Wales. Registered Number 2366678.





# Water meters

## Your questions answered

### Fitting the water meter

#### How do I apply to have a water meter fitted?

Please complete the enclosed application form and post this back to us. Alternatively, call us on **0345 072 6065** and we can book an appointment over the phone. You can also log in to your account at [unitedutilities.com/myaccount](https://unitedutilities.com/myaccount) to apply online.

#### Where will the water meter be fitted?

We normally fit the water meter inside your home free of charge (on the water supply pipe, which is the pipe which brings water into your home). If we cannot fit the meter inside your home, we will fit it outside instead (in some instances a purpose made meter box may already exist outside your home - if this is the case we would fit the meter in this box).

We will visit your home to carry out a survey to decide on the best place to fit the meter. We will try our best to fit your meter during this visit, but we may have to come back again if this isn't possible.

In order to establish the best location for your meter without having to carry out a survey, we may ask you to send a video from your phone showing the location of your stop tap. We will only ask you to do this if it is safe to do so and you are comfortable with the process.

As the meter needs to be attached to your water supply pipe (which is often found under the kitchen sink), we may ask you to move certain items so that we can do this (such as any white goods that might be blocking the water supply pipe, wood panelling etc).

We can do minor joinery work when we fit your meter, and will always make sure you are happy about this before we start any work.

#### Can I pay to have the water meter fitted elsewhere?

Yes. If it's possible for us to install the water meter in our preferred location (inside your home), but you would like the water meter to be outside, we will check to see if this is possible. Unfortunately, some properties cannot be metered externally, see next section for full details. If we are able to install the water meter in the footpath for you, you will need to pay the difference in cost, which is **£243.52 plus VAT**.

### Can you always fit a water meter?

No, not always. Here are the most common reasons for not being able to fit a water meter:

- You live in a flat and have a shared hot water supply.
- You have more than one supply of water to your property - meaning we would need to fit more than one water meter.
- The pipe supplying water to your property also supplies other properties.
- The pipework inside your property is inaccessible, in poor condition, or does not comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.
- We are unable to find a suitable place to fit the water meter in either
  - the footpath or public highway outside your property
  - inside your home.

If we can't fit a water meter at your home we will review your account to see if it's a cheaper option for you to pay your water and wastewater services based on an assessed charge, which is a fixed amount per year. The amount you pay depends on the type of property you live in, unless you are eligible for our single person tariff or our pensioner tariff. If this is the case will arrange for your tariff to be updated and send you a revised bill.

If your existing pipework is not currently suitable for a meter, you have the option to arrange for your own plumber to make changes to the pipework to allow us to fit a meter.

If you have or intend to carry out any renovations to your property now or in the future, it is worth talking to us again as sometimes changes made during renovations may mean that we are able to fit a meter to your new or altered pipework.

### When will you read the water meter?

We will usually read the water meter for billing purposes every six months. The meters we fit inside homes can be remotely read, which means they send readings to us automatically without us having to enter your home. However, there may be occasions in the future when we need to enter your home to maintain, inspect or replace the meter.

### For further information



[unitedutilities.com/meters](https://unitedutilities.com/meters)



**0345 072 6065**  
For opening hours please visit [unitedutilities.com/contactus](https://unitedutilities.com/contactus) where you can also get in touch with us online.



**United Utilities**  
PO Box 246,  
Warrington  
WA55 1EA

If we've been unable to read the water meter, we will leave a card explaining what to do next. An actual reading, taken either by you, or by our meter reader, will make sure you receive an accurate bill.

### **How long will it take to fit the water meter?**

We'll fit the meter within **four weeks** of receiving your application, provided our survey shows that a meter can be fitted. We'll contact you within two weeks of receiving your application to confirm when we will carry out the survey.

Once the survey is completed we will then arrange a convenient date with you to fit your meter. We will try our best to fit your meter during this visit, but we may have to come back again if this isn't possible.

In the unlikely event that we take longer than four weeks to fit the water meter, we will normally credit your account with **£6.00** for every full week after we fail to meet our standard. There are some circumstances when you may not be entitled to this allowance.

These include:

- If you haven't filled in your application form correctly and need to re-send it to us.
- If we make an appointment with you to fit the water meter and you miss or cancel that appointment.
- If you fail to carry out any necessary alterations to your pipework (we will let you know if alterations are required at the time of the survey). If you fail to carry out these alterations within four weeks, your original request will be cancelled and you will have to re-apply for a water meter.
- If you ask us to delay fitting the water meter beyond the four weeks.

### **I'm a tenant, can I apply to have a water meter fitted?**

Yes, unless you have a fixed term tenancy agreement of less than six months in which case you must obtain your landlord's permission before applying for a water meter.

### **I'm a landlord, can I apply to have a water meter fitted at one of my properties?**

You can only ask us to fit a water meter if your name is on the water bill. Please make sure you tell your tenants that you want a water meter fitted at the property.

### **Can I change my mind after the water meter has been fitted?**

Yes, unless you are a high water user. For example, if you fill a pond or swimming pool (with a capacity over 10,000 litres) automatically, use a sprinkler, or your property is a household but has water use for business purposes, then you'd have to keep your metered bills.

For everyone else you can switch back any time within 24 months of the meter being fitted.

We'll not remove the meter but all your future bills will be based on the rateable value of your property, as before. If you decide not to switch back within the first 24 months of

the meter being fitted then you'll continue to pay charges based on your meter readings and won't have the option of moving back to your old way of charging for water services.

### **Will fitting a water meter affect the electrical earthing in my property?**

If we fit the water meter inside your home, nothing we do will change the continuity of the earthing or bonding of your electrical system. We'll fit a permanent bonding cable around the water meter and this must stay in place.

If we've fitted the water meter outside your home, and your electrical system used the water service pipe as an earth, there may be some effect. You have responsibility for the correct electrical earthing of your property. If you are concerned about this please contact a qualified electrician.

### **What happens if my water supply pipe leaks?**

We have a private leak repair scheme for household customers. This means that, in certain cases, we may repair a leak on your external supply pipe without charge. We'll only repair any leaks on the pipework between the property boundary (often the garden wall) and the outside wall of your home but not under buildings or on internal plumbing. Full details can be found at [unitedutilities.com/bursthme](http://unitedutilities.com/bursthme)

### **Will I have to pay for water wasted because of leaks?**

When you have a water meter, we charge you for all the water that passes through it. We recommend you take regular meter readings to help identify any leaks on your pipework. If you discover a leak you have the right to make a claim for the water lost. We'll refund the cost of any water lost from the leak, provided that this is the first burst that has occurred and it's repaired within 30 days of discovering it. **Note: we will only make one adjustment for an internal leak and one adjustment for an external leak per customer per property.**

We may also give an allowance against your wastewater charges. Visit [unitedutilities.com/bursthme](http://unitedutilities.com/bursthme) for full details about our leakage code of practice and to download a claim form.

### **Who owns the water meter?**

United Utilities owns the water meter. We are responsible for maintaining, repairing and replacing it.

### **If I move house can the new occupier go back to charges based on the rateable value of the property?**

All new occupants will be charged for their water services based on their meter readings (even if you have changed back to paying charges based on rateable value as we don't remove the meter once it has been installed).

## Can I remove the water meter?

No. It's illegal to tamper with, obstruct access to, or remove, a water meter.

## Your bill

### How often will you send me a bill?

You'll receive a bill every six months. This is for water and wastewater services you've already used. The date you receive your bill depends on when we read the water meter.

Your first metered bill could arrive at any time up to six months after the water meter has been fitted. If we have been unable to get either our own reading, or a reading from you, we will send you an estimated bill.

### How can I pay my bill?

We offer a range of flexible ways for you to pay your bill. You can pay by Direct Debit, cash or cheque. Some customers prefer to pay each bill as it arrives, but most prefer to spread the cost over the year by choosing a budget payment scheme. We estimate how much water you'll use in a year and divide the total into regular monthly payments. The following year we'll adjust the amount you pay (up or down) based on how much water you're actually using.

### Can I pay by Direct Debit?

Yes. Direct Debit takes the hassle out of paying your water bill and you can spread your payments. We'll also give you **£5** off your bill each year. Simply call us on **0345 672 2999**.

## I currently pay by Direct Debit.

### Do I have to fill in another form?

No, you don't have to do anything. We'll continue with your arrangement unless you tell us otherwise.

### What happens to my 'old' bill after the water meter has been fitted?

Regardless of how you currently pay, please make sure you keep paying your bill until we fit the water meter.

Once the water meter has been fitted, we'll finalise your 'old' bill and, if we owe you any money, we will reduce your first metered bill by this amount. This will show as a credit balance. If you owe us money on your 'old' bill we will send you an account for the outstanding balance.

### How does the lowest bill guarantee work?

Before we send you a bill, we will compare your meter charges against what you would have paid on your old rateable value bills over the same period. We then charge you whatever is the lowest amount.

At the end of the two year trial period we will show your meter charges against your rateable value bills so you can clearly see if you've saved money with a meter. You can then make the decision to switch back to your old rateable value bills if you've not made a saving over the two year trial.

## Potential savings at a glance

This table shows how much money you could potentially save each year if you have a water meter.

- Firstly, find out from your water bill how much you currently pay each year.
- Then, compare this against the number of people in your household
- The potential savings are shown in the darker boxes.
- The lighter boxes show that savings are unlikely and in most cases you are already getting the best value for money.

*\* Savings per year based on average consumption and number of occupants (2024/2025 prices).*

People in household:	Annual bill without a water meter				Potential savings*
	£450 - £550	£550 - £650	£650 - £750	£750 - £850	
1	£102-£202	£202-£302	£302-£402	£402-£502	Potential savings*
2	Small savings possible	£33-£133	£133-£233	£233-£333	
3	Savings unlikely	Small savings possible	£12-£112	£112 - £212	
4	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	Small savings possible	£1 - £101	
5	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	Small savings possible	
6	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	

These cost savings are **only a guide** and will depend upon your water usage. Please visit [unitedutilities.com/meters](https://unitedutilities.com/meters) and try our online water meter calculator for a more accurate calculation.

# Your rights and responsibilities

(this is the legal bit - sorry if it all sounds a bit formal!)

This section tells you about your legal rights and responsibilities relating to your water and wastewater services charges. It covers issues such as leaks, moving premises, supply pipes and the water meter itself.

The occupier of premises is liable for charges except where another person has agreed with us to accept responsibility, in which case that person is liable.

In most landlord and tenant situations it is normally the tenant who is charged as the occupier and not the landlord. Exceptions include some accommodation where the occupation of the tenants is temporary. In these cases the landlord will usually be charged as the occupier.

Charges will be made when premises are occupied or where we provide services to those premises.

Unless we have reached another agreement with you, charges are payable when you receive your bill and we must receive your payment within 14 days.

We will charge you for all the water which has passed through the water meter regardless of any loss, wastage, leakage or misuse. **However, we will only make one adjustment for an internal leak and one adjustment for an external leak per customer per property.**

This is to cover both water and wastewater charges. You must have repaired the leak within any time limit we set, or within 30 days, whichever is the later. Our 'Leakage code of practice' for metered domestic properties gives you more information. You can get a copy by calling us on **0345 672 2999** or by visiting [unitedutilities.com/bursthme](http://unitedutilities.com/bursthme).

If, for any reason, we cannot establish how much water has passed through the water meter, we will estimate the amount of water used to base your charges on. If appropriate, we will adjust this charge later. For any period of time when the water meter is out of order, our estimate will be based on the most reliable information available.

If you have a measured water supply you are liable for water services charges until either:

- (i) you leave the premises having given us an up to date meter reading; or
- (ii) you request that the supply is disconnected; or
- (iii) where the water meter serves more than one premises the person who accepted responsibility for payment of the charges gives a reasonable period of notice to end the agreement.

In the case of (i) if you don't give notice then the charges will be payable until the next meter reading is taken or until 28 days after you inform us as provided by section 144 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

You are responsible for the water supply pipe serving your property. This is usually the section of pipe from the boundary of your property (often the garden wall) into your property. In some cases, particularly in rural areas, you may be responsible for more pipework between the part of the street in which our main is laid and your property or where the supply pipe crosses someone else's land. If you are in any doubt about your responsibility, more information may be available from the deeds of your property.

The water meter remains our property. This means that we are responsible for maintaining and eventually replacing it. We will do this at our own expense, unless the water meter has been tampered with.

Tampering with a water meter is a serious offence. You should not remove the water meter, obstruct access to it or carry out any work on it without our permission. We will recover the costs of any expense, loss or damage from the person responsible.

Occasionally we may need to test your water meter, or if you ask us to, we must test it. If you have asked us to test the water meter, and it is not faulty, you must pay for the test. For more information, visit [unitedutilities.com/leaflets](http://unitedutilities.com/leaflets) and download our 'Testing your household water meter' leaflet.

You also have the option of having the water meter tested by the Trading Standards Officer. If you wish to do this, you should contact your local Trading Standards Department directly.

Under the Lowest Bill Guarantee scheme and during the 24 month period and each time your meter is read, we will compare the cost of your metered charges to what your charges would have been on an unmetered basis and you will be billed the lower of the two amounts.

The lowest bill guarantee scheme is only applicable for those customers using water for normal domestic purposes. All excessive usage will be investigated and if found to be outside the terms of the lowest bill guarantee, the price promise will not be applied and the customer will be reverted to a compulsory meter.

## About us

United Utilities is the North West's water company. We keep the taps flowing and toilets flushing for seven million customers every day. From Crewe to Carlisle, we work hard behind the scenes to help your life flow smoothly.