



Severn Trent Connect Code of Practice

Table of Contents

1 Introduction.....	6
2 Severn Trent Connect your water services Company	7
2.1 Ownership.....	7
2.2 Services provided.....	7
2.3 Relevance.....	7
3 Who regulates the service that we provide?	8
3.1 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	8
3.2 Office of Water Services (Ofwat).....	8
3.3 The Environment Agency (EA)	9
3.4 Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)	9
3.5 Our promise	10
4 Water supply	11
4.1 Water quality.....	11
4.2 Water Fittings Regulations 1999	12
4.3 Rights of entry.....	13
4.4 Quantity.....	13
4.5 Water pressure	14
4.6 Supply interruption.....	14
4.7 Responsibility for water pipes.....	15
4.8 Shared customer service pipe.....	15
4.9 Leaks.....	16
4.10 What can I do if I think my meter is inaccurate?.....	16
4.11 Who owns the meter at my property?.....	17
4.12 What to do if you discover a leak	17
5 Dealing with wastewater	19
5.1 Background.....	19
5.2 Types of Sewers.....	19

5.3	Sewers we're responsible for.....	20
5.4	Responsibility of drains and sewers.....	20
5.5	Adoption of private pumping stations	21
5.6	Adoption of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).....	21
5.7	What we are NOT responsible for	22
5.8	Maps of our sewers	23
5.9	Help us avoid sewer blockages	23
5.10	Fats, Oils and Greases.....	24
5.11	Clearing blockages on private drains.....	24
5.12	Protection against flooding from public sewers.....	25
5.13	Pollutions from wrong connections	26
5.14	New sewer connections.....	27
5.15	Connection to an existing public sewer.....	27
5.16	Sewer connections requiring a new public sewer	28
5.17	Building over/close to a public sewer	28
5.18	Provision of a public sewer where there are environmental or amenity problems.....	29
5.19	Infrastructure Charges.....	30
5.20	Sewage treatment	30
5.21	Removal of rainwater (surface water drainage)	30
6	Our pipelaying powers on private land.....	31
6.1	Planning a route	31
6.2	Surveying and trial holes.....	32
6.3	Consultation and notice of work.....	32
6.4	Contacts.....	33
6.5	Alterations to existing pipes.....	33
6.6	Before the work occurs	34
6.6.1	Timing of the work	35
6.6.2	Compensation	36

6.6.3 Agents	36
6.6.4 Record of condition of land.....	36
6.6.5 Location of pipes and equipment.....	36
6.7 Supervision during the work	37
6.7.1 Access for owners and occupiers.....	37
6.7.2 Access for ourselves.....	37
6.7.3 Security of your property and of the working strip	38
6.7.4 Topsoil.....	38
6.7.5 Trees and hedgerows	38
6.7.6 Land drainage.....	39
6.7.7 Watercourses.....	39
6.7.8 Water supplies and other services.....	40
6.7.9 Area affected by disease.....	40
6.7.10 Fishing and sporting rights.....	40
6.7.11 Facilities for our workers	40
6.7.12 Private agreements	41
6.7.13 Explosives.....	41
6.7.14 Cathodic protection.....	41
6.7.15 Temporary support	41
6.7.16 Fossils and articles discovered	41
6.8 Reinstatement after the work	41
6.8.1 Information.....	43
6.8.2 Compensation	43
6.8.3 Complaints	43

7 Your Water Bill	44
7.1 Bills for unmetered customers.....	44
7.2. Bills for metered customers.....	44
7.3 Bills for assessed volume customers.....	45
7.4 Current charges.....	45
7.5 How can I pay my bill?.....	47
7.5.1 Can I pay directly from my benefits?	47
7.6 I'm moving house, what do I do?	47
7.7 What if I have a dispute about my bill?	48
7.8 WaterSure – are any bill reductions available for vulnerable customers? 48	
7.9 As a tenant, when am I responsible for paying the bill?	49
7.10 As a landlord, when am I responsible for paying the bill?.....	49
7.11 What will happen if I don't pay?.....	49
7.12 Do you use debt collection agencies?.....	50
7.13 Bailiffs	51
7.14 Who else can you contact for help and advice	51
7.14.1 Citizens Advice Bureau	51
7.14.2 Consumer Credit Counselling Service	51
7.14.3 Other debt counselling services.....	52
7.14.4 Consumer Council for Water (CCWater).....	52
7.15 Will you share my data?	52
8 What to do if you are unhappy with our service	54
8.1 If you want to make a complaint, what should you do?	54
8.2 What happens if you have a dispute?	56
8.3 When can you expect us to respond?	58

8.4	Warning – bogus callers.....	58
8.5	Bogus callers – our password protection scheme	59
8.6	Don't let them in	59
8.7	Beware of certain phrases	59
8.8	Individual needs.....	59
9	Guaranteed Services Standards	61
9.1	Telling us about our service	61
9.2	What are the guarantees of service to you?.....	61
	Customer contacts	62
	Constancy of supply.....	65
	Notice of interruption to supply.....	66
	External sewer flooding.....	68
	Internal sewer flooding	69
9.3	How and when will we pay you?	69
9.4	Circumstances when we won't make a payment.....	70
9.5	How we review our service standards.....	70
9.6	Our contact details.....	70

1 Introduction

Severn Trent Connect (ST Connect) is the trading name of Severn Trent Services (Water and Sewerage) Limited, ("the Company", "we", "our" or "us") we aim to provide you with a high quality service and this document sets out our Code of Practice. It describes the services we provide, what your rights are as a household customer and what to do if things go wrong. The Codes have been produced in consultation with the Consumer Council for Water (CCW). From time to time we'll revise the Codes and update them to include our improvements in services to you. Nothing in our Codes of Practice affects your rights under the Law, nor is it a contract between the Company and you.

If you need to contact our Customer Service helpline please call the following number:

0345 450 9549

If you would like to contact us by e-mail please use:

customer@severntrentconnect.com


If you would like to contact us by post our address is:

Customer Services
Severn Trent Connect
Severn Trent Centre
2 St.Johns Street
Coventry CV1 2LZ

However you choose to contact us, one of our customer service team will respond promptly and effectively to your concerns.

Neil Corrigall

Director, Severn Trent Connect

SIGNED: 

DATE: 21st February 2019

2 Severn Trent Connect your water services Company

We operate under a licence which was granted by the Secretary of State for the Environment. This means that there are many laws and regulations which govern what we do, including our duty to maintain our sewerage system, and the rights you have as a customer. Independent regulators monitor our business to ensure that we operate fairly. In addition to this we have introduced our own policies and services which go beyond the minimum obligations. This Code of Practice details our comprehensive service for our customers, what your rights are and what to do if things go wrong.

2.1 Ownership

Severn Trent Services (Water and Sewerage) Limited trading as Severn Trent Connect is licensed to provide wastewater services to customers in England and Wales. We are a wholly-owned subsidiary of Severn Trent Plc, a private limited company registered in England.

2.2 Services provided

We provide clean water and/or wastewater services to our customers.

2.3 Relevance

This code is intended for all of our household customers where we are the appointed service provider. If you are in receipt of a bill or a new household customer pack either directly from us or combined with your water provider's bill, then your home or falls within the ST Connect appointed area of operations.

3 Who regulates the service that we provide?

3.1 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Defra lays down the standards of quality of drinking water which include the European Commission's requirements. It also makes sure that we comply with these standards.

You can contact Defra at:

Defra Helpline
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

3.2 Office of Water Services (Ofwat)

Ofwat is the economic regulator of the industry whose statutory duties include protecting customers' interests. Ofwat has the power to restrict the increases we can make in our water and sewerage charges, set the levels of service we must provide and stipulate the information we must give to you.

You can contact Ofwat at:

Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham
B5 4UA
Tel: 0121 644 7500

3.3 The Environment Agency (EA)

The EA is responsible for controlling the pollution of rivers, draining land, controlling floods and issuing fishing licences. The EA regulates how much water we may take from the rivers and other inland and underground sources for water supply and our return of the water to rivers after it has been used and treated.

You can contact the EA at:

The Environment Agency
National Customer Contact Centre
PO Box 544
Rotherham S60 1BY
Tel: 0370 850 6506

3.4 Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)

The DWI are responsible for checking that the water companies in England and Wales supply safe drinking water that is acceptable to consumers and meets the standards set down in law.

You can contact the DWI at:

Drinking Water Inspectorate>
Area 1A
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

Telephone: 0300 068 6400

E-mail: dwI.enquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk

3.5 Our promise

We are committed to the delivery of high quality and good value services to customers, at the same time as minimising the impact of our activities on the environment. We will put you at the heart of everything we do in ensuring that we provide you with excellent customer service and we welcome your feedback on the quality of our service to you.

4 Water supply

We currently supply water to customers at the Aurum Green site, Basingstoke. For our sites where we are only providing wastewater services you will need to contact your water supplier if you have any questions on:

- Potable water supply
- Non-potable water supply
- Recycled water
- Water supply charges
- Plumbing alterations including replacing lead pipes
- Relaying or new connections for water supply
- Water main leakage
- Advice on water efficiency
- Water meter information, how to read and location of your meter
- Requesting a water meter
- Meter testing
- Viewing water main maps

In the event that your water supplier grants a leakage allowance, an adjustment will also be made to your sewerage charges.

4.1 Water quality

The quality of water for domestic purposes is controlled by Regulations issued by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). These incorporate, and in some cases are more stringent than, the requirements of the European Community Drinking Water Directive. Standards are set for the chemical and bacterial quality of the water and also its acceptability – colour, clarity, smell and taste. Our supplies meet the requirements of the Regulations and we aim to maintain and further improve on this, where necessary.

In line with the Regulations, we must sample and test the water at regular intervals. Our Quality Inspectors visit properties each year at random and we're required to maintain records of those tests. Whenever we take a sample of your water following a complaint, we'll give you details of our analysis and our interpretation of the results.

If you want to know about the water in your area or if you have a complaint about the quality of your drinking water, please contact us.

Sometimes the quality and appearance of the water can be temporally affected by activities on the water distribution network such as emergency fire service use or repair and maintenance work such the water may discoloured or murky with a brown, black or orange colour . A quick fix to resolve discolouration would be run a pencil thin stream of water from the tap nearest your stop tap for 20 minutes (normally your kitchen tap). You can find lots of helpful hints and tips on our website. However, if you are concerned in any way and think there is a serious problem, please contact us straight away.

<https://www.severntrentconnect.com/household-customers/faqs>

On very rare occasions, as a precaution it may be necessary to advise you to boil your water or even not to use it at all for drinking and cooking. We'll tell you as soon as possible using the most appropriate method. In these circumstances, we'll work closely with public health and medical experts and appropriate authorities.

4.2 Water Fittings Regulations 1999

These Regulations are national requirements for the design, installation and maintenance of plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances. Their purpose is to prevent misuse, waste, under consumption or erroneous measurement of water and, most importantly, to prevent contamination of drinking water.

The Government requires water suppliers to enforce the Regulations, therefore we'll undertake inspections of new and existing installations to check that the Regulations are being met. Where breaches of the Regulations are found, we'll require them to be remedied as soon as practicable. Where breaches pose a risk to health, the water supply to the premises may be disconnected immediately to protect the health of occupants or others fed from the same public supply. It's a criminal offence to breach the Regulations and offenders may face prosecution. Plumbing systems must be designed, installed and maintained to meet the Regulations' requirements. Plumbing must be properly installed and maintained to protect water quality, to make sure safety, ease of access for maintenance, detection of leakage, protection against

damage or freezing etc. If you are doing your own installation, make sure you know what requirements you must meet. If you're employing someone else, consider using an approved contractor who will guarantee compliance of the new installation. The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 and their Schedules and Statutory Instruments (1999 No. 1148 and No. 1506) are available from HMSO and via the internet (legislation.gov.uk).

4.3 Rights of entry

We have statutory rights of entry to customers' premises to investigate compliance with Regulations, to take samples, and carry out surveys and work. Except in an emergency, we'll call at a reasonable time. When exercising our rights of entry, we'll give you 24 hours' notice for investigating Regulations compliance and monitoring water quality and seven days' notice in all other cases. If we haven't given you notice you have the right to refuse entry.

4.4 Quantity

We must provide you with enough water for normal domestic purposes - that is drinking, washing, cooking, central heating and sanitation, as well as watering the garden and washing the car, without using a hosepipe, we aim to make sure that in normal supply conditions you can use a hosepipe if you wish.

The weather is becoming increasingly unpredictable and in recent years we have experienced lower than average rainfall for our region, at a time when the demand for water has been rising. We have a duty to promote water efficiency and we have responded to this by putting together a water efficiency plan. This is to make sure that we have enough water to meet your requirements without having to impose restrictions.

OUR PLANS INCLUDE:

- Monitoring of our network to ensure prompt response to leaks.
- Promoting water savings and efficiency to reduce demand.

Although we don't anticipate having to do so, we may have to impose temporary restrictions on non-essential uses, such as hosepipes, in extreme conditions. If these

persist, we may have to resort to standpipes but we'll make sure that customers affected will receive compensation.

4.5 Water pressure

The company must maintain a minimum pressure in the communication pipe of seven metres static head (0.7 bar). If pressure falls below this on two occasions, each occasion lasting more than one hour, within a 28-day period, the company must automatically make a GSS payment. This applies in normal operating conditions and is limited to one payment per year.

Pressure and flow rates in your home can be adversely affected by a number of factors:

- The height of the property above the water main and its height relative to the reservoir.
- The condition and size of the customer's service pipe.
- Whether the property shares a service pipe with other properties.
- Peak demand conditions.

If you think that your water pressure is too low, we'll investigate the cause free of charge. If the cause is our responsibility, we'll take appropriate action. If it's not, we'll tell you what you need to do.

4.6 Supply interruption

While we work to provide a constant supply of water, some events will inevitably interrupt the flow. For example, bursts in mains and the failures of pumps or their electricity supply. If there's a problem, contact our Customer Operations Service Centre (0345 450 9549) and we'll investigate immediately. If the mains supply fails, we must restore it as soon as possible. Our target is to do so in less than 12 hours but the larger mains are more difficult to repair and can take longer. If the interruption lasts longer than 24 hours, we must provide you with an emergency supply.

Alternative supplies will only be provided to Non Household Customers (NHH) who are classed as sensitive under our sensitive customer guidance or Public Health related site specific arrangements. If we plan to interrupt your supply for more than four hours to do planned maintenance work, we must give you reasonable written notice (normally 48 hours). We'll also inform you of the duration of the interruption. If we fail to give you notice or fail to restore the supply by the time stated, you'll be entitled to a service guarantee payment.

4.7 Responsibility for water pipes

The water mains in the public highway are generally ours. Some water mains cross private land and we have powers to lay and maintain those mains. Normally the service pipe is ours until it reaches the boundary of the highway. Most properties have an underground stop tap at the boundary which is our responsibility.

The service pipe from the stop tap which takes the water into your house is normally yours (or your landlord's). This part of the service pipe is usually referred to as the customer service pipe. It's your responsibility to maintain your pipe in good order just as you would maintain the plumbing in your house, even when, as in some cases, it runs under other properties before reaching your house. If you have any problems on your pipework, call us and we may be able to help.

4.8 Shared customer service pipe

You may share a service pipe with one or more of your neighbours and the flow of water at your tap may be unacceptably low when your neighbours are using water. If the pipe is in a poor condition, we can require you and your neighbours to share the cost of replacing it with separate pipes. This would improve both the flow and the quality of water at your tap. We can also require separation of a shared pipe if:

- One of the households on the shared pipe falls into payment arrears.
- The houses are converted into a larger number of flats or homes.
- The shared pipe has been tampered with.

If any dispute arises about the circumstances outlined above, it may be referred to our regulator, Ofwat to decide the outcome.

4.9 Leaks

The legal position is that where there is a leak on your service pipe it is your responsibility to repair it. If your bill seems abnormally high, it may mean that there is a leak on your service pipe or it may be due to high consumption; for example, if a garden hose was used during the period covered by your bill. If you suspect that there is a leak on your pipe, you can check this yourself by:

- Turning off all the taps in the house and making sure that there is no water being used.
- Read the meter and take a note of the reading. Your meter may be internal or external in a boundary box. You should read all of the digits on the meter from left to right, making a note of where the decimal place is.
- Take a second reading after a few hours, ensuring that no water is used in the property in the meantime.
- If the second reading is higher, there may be a leak.
- You can also check for other signs of a leak such as areas of lush vegetation during dry periods and other obvious damp patches or a constant noise coming from the pipes in your home that sounds like water being used. Checking for any faults with water flowing through your toilet overflow (particularly for new bathroom fittings where the overflow is diverted back down the toilet flow) can be useful.

4.10 What can I do if I think my meter is inaccurate?

Water meters are very accurate and are manufactured and tested to a British Standard specification. If you think that your meter is not recording correctly please call us to discuss further.

We can carry out a simple test free of charge but if you would like to have the meter removed for independent testing there will be a charge of £70 payable for this work to be undertaken.

If the test results show the meter to be faulty we will refund the test fee and amend your bills for the last two meter readings.

4.11 Who owns the meter at my property?

In legal terms the water meter is our property and you mustn't remove it or instruct anyone to remove it for you (e.g. a plumber) under any circumstances. This is because it's a contravention of the Water Act (as stated in section 175 of the Water Industry Act 1991) and can be a criminal offence to interfere with, wilfully damage or remove the meter. If you're convicted of doing any of these things you could face a large fine. If you do remove the meter and refuse to have it refitted, we can fit an external meter at your property. If we have to do this, you would be liable for the cost.

The meter shouldn't be obstructed or boxed in as this may prevent us being able to take a reading or carry out any maintenance work. If this happens, we may have to remove or cut away the boxing so that a meter reading can be taken.

4.12 What to do if you discover a leak

If a leak is discovered on your supply pipe, we all want it repaired quickly and as part of our effort to reduce leakage we'll support you as much as possible through the process of repairing your supply pipe. Please remember that if there's a leak on your pipe then legally it is your responsibility to repair it. Household customers may receive one allowance per property for water lost through leakage from the section of service pipe they are responsible for during their occupancy of the premises.

Contact our Customer Leakage Support team on [0345 450 9549](tel:03454509549) and they will be able to talk you through the options available to you. Often, homeowners will have insurance cover which they can use to cover the cost of a repair. You must take steps to stop the waste within a 28 day period. Please contact us if you are having difficulty getting your leak fixed.

If you don't take steps to repair a leak that you are responsible for within a reasonable period of time we'll send a notice to you and any other customers who are supplied by the same pipe telling you that the work has to be done at your own cost. If you still haven't repaired the leak after the time limit we have given we'll take steps to obtain a warrant from a magistrate's court to allow us access to your property to stop the leak by making a repair. If this happens we'll charge you for the full cost of the repairs, or a proportion if the supply is shared. You'll also have to pay for all of the water which has passed through the meter since the leak was identified. If, in extreme cases, the leak endangers people or property or threatens to contaminate the public water supply, we'll cut off the supply.

If you spot a leak in the road, please contact our Customer Operations Service Centre on [0345 450 9549](tel:03454509549) so that we can arrange an appointment to visit.

5 Dealing with wastewater

5.1 Background

We provide and maintain a system of public sewers, which take the waste water from your buildings and drains to our sewage treatment works. The system of pipes which carry the waste water is called the foul sewerage system.

We also collect rain water run-off from roofs, as well as from some roads and other paved areas, and transfer it to suitable watercourses and rivers through surface water sewerage systems. In some older systems rain water is connected to a shared system which also takes foul water away and these are often referred to as combined sewers.

5.2 Types of Sewers

The three main types of sewer are:

- Surface water sewers: carry rainwater which runs off roofs and roads directly into rivers, watercourses and eventually the sea.
- Foul sewers: carry the waste from toilets – water which has been used for cooking and washing and effluent from industrial premises – to sewage treatment works.
- Combined sewers: carry both the rainwater run-off from roofs and roads, as well as water which has been used for domestic and industrial purposes, to sewage treatment works.

Whilst most sewerage systems flow downhill using gravity, in low lying areas we may also use pumping stations to pump flows uphill to our sewage treatment works. Each pumping station has at least one pressurised pipe. These pumping stations vary in size – some will have large buildings while others only have a small control kiosk. All are powered by electricity and are installed with monitoring systems to flag up if a maintenance visit is needed.

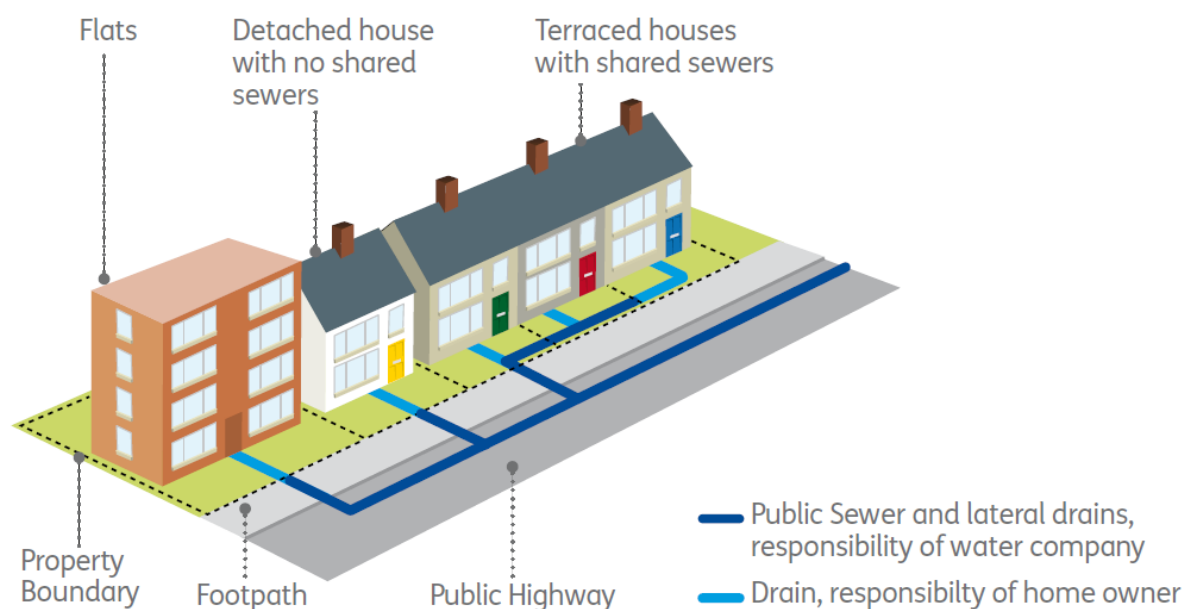
5.3 Sewers we're responsible for

We're responsible for the majority of the sewers which drain buildings and roofs that serve residential areas and industrial complexes. We also adopt most sewers built as part of new development. Most of these sewers are situated under roads and public areas but can also be located on private land.

5.4 Responsibility of drains and sewers

All waste water pipes serving more than a single property in our area are our responsibility. Where pipes only serve one property, we're only responsible for the pipe from the point where it leaves the curtilage (generally the boundary of your property). These are called lateral drains. All pipes within a property boundary that serve just a single property are referred to as private drains and remain the responsibility of the property owner.

The diagram below explains these responsibilities and shows the normal layout of most drain and sewer systems which applies to most property types. For ease, the diagram only shows a single system, but most properties have two separate systems draining them – one for waste water and one for rainwater.



Any self-contained sewerage systems remain the responsibility of the private owner.

For example septic tanks, private treatment facilities that don't connect to the public sewerage system, as well as the pipes which connect your property to the plant/tank.

If you're buying a property, your solicitor should undertake searches that confirm which pipes will be your responsibility. You're responsible for the maintenance, repair or replacement of all pipes that remain private, and it's a good idea to check their condition (e.g. ask the owners if they have experienced any problems, or survey the pipes).

Most of our sewers are situated under roads or public open spaces, however occasionally our sewers may run through private land. In this case we need to preserve a right of access for maintenance and legal protection against building over or near our pipes. Where we need to lay or maintain pipes in your land, we'll follow a Code of Practice for working on private land. Please refer to section 4 for more information. There are restrictions on how close you can build to any public sewers that run across your land. Ofwat can consider complaints about work on private land under section 181 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

5.5 Adoption of private pumping stations

The legislation which transferred private drains and sewers into water company ownership also included private pumping stations which transferred to us on or before 1 October 2016.

We are not obliged to adopt pumping stations which only serve a single property as these will remain in private ownership.

5.6 Adoption of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

SuDS can be used on new and existing developments and should be designed to maximise Surface Water Management. Severn Trent Connect will consider the adoption of SuDS. The following table sets out what is adoptable by Severn Trent Connect:

Asset	What is adoptable?
Sewers and Manholes	In accordance with s102 or s104 of the Water Industry Act 1991, all sewers and manholes that are in line with the current edition of "Sewers for Adoption" will be adoptable.
Underground Storage	Underground storage including tanks and large diameter pipes are adoptable. Note: certain types of underground storage are not approved for adoption by Severn Trent Connect, such as certain geo-cellular storage products that do not allow for regular maintenance such as jetting.
Above Ground Storage	Above ground storage assets such as balancing ponds, swales and detention ponds are adoptable
	Sewers reliant on this storage option are also adoptable if Severn Trent Connect has a right to discharge.
Infiltration Systems	Infiltration systems, such as soakaways and infiltration trenches are adoptable if the soakaways serve houses.
	Sewers reliant on this storage option are also adoptable if Severn Trent Connect has a right to discharge.
Private Storage	Private storage assets are not adoptable.
	Sewers reliant on this storage option are adoptable if a maintenance regime is in place in line with the CIRIA SUDS manual report C753 and Severn Trent Connect has in place a right to discharge.

5.7 What we are NOT responsible for

We're not responsible for maintaining road gullies, lateral drains that discharge to a cesspool or soakaway, highway drains, land drainage, ground water, watercourses,

culverted watercourses or rivers. Where the performance of our sewerage systems is being unduly affected owing to interaction with other systems we will work with the respective authorities. If you discover a broken manhole cover in the road please contact your local highway authority. If there is a broken manhole cover on private land please let us know and we will check who owns it.

5.8 Maps of our sewers

It is our duty to keep maps showing the position of public sewers and you have a right to view these. The maps are free to view at our offices in Coventry during normal office hours, please contact us for more information.

5.9 Help us avoid sewer blockages

We are all responsible for what we put down into the sewer. No one likes sewer flooding and it is often avoidable. ST Connect request all customers to help beat potential blockages by avoiding putting the following items down the toilet and drains:

- Sanitary products
- Fat, oil, and grease, including butter, ghee, or frying oils
- Cleansing wipes, baby wipes & facial wipes
- Cotton buds & cotton wool
- Tissues
- Nappies
- Kitchen roll
- Condoms
- Razors or needles
- Medicine
- Car oil, paint thinner or other chemicals
- Bandages and plasters
- Dental floss
- Underwear & tights
- Incontinence pads

The blockages don't always occur in the sewer pipes either, a significant number of people suffer from blocked toilets and drains by flushing items such as baby wipes, make-up wipes, sanitary products and cotton buds.

5.10 Fats, Oils and Greases

Most of us use fat and oil in the preparation of food, but residual cooking oil, margarine, butter or lard often ends up being washed down the kitchen sink.

Fats Oils and Greases may be liquid when you pour them down the sink but in the cooler environment of the sewers, these fats, oils and greases collect inside the sewers and over time harden to a concrete-like material and restrict the flow of wastewater in the pipes. The use of detergents does not prevent this build up.

These blockages can cause wastewater to back up through toilets and sinks into homes and businesses or escape through manholes into streets and rivers.

5.11 Clearing blockages on private drains

Blockages in sewers can result in smells, back-up of sewage, flooding or pollution. If we receive a call from you notifying us of a blockage that needs clearing we'll try to establish whether the blockage is within our network or within the pipework that you're responsible for. If the blockage is in your pipework, we can either send a technician out for a fixed fee (please refer to the information below regarding this service) or, alternatively, you can choose to deal with it yourself, pay a drain clearing company to clear the problem or resolve it via your insurer.

Where we can't confirm the location of a problem through our questions, or where we believe the problem to be in our pipework, we'll send out a field technician. We will attend your property within six hours and will aim to attend within two hours in an emergency. If our technician discovers the problem is actually on the pipe you're responsible for, they'll let you know. You can then either use an independent drainage contractor to carry out any necessary work, or we'll offer to clear the blockage. There's a charge for this service and you'll be offered an upfront fixed price to clear the blockage. If you can't pay for the service, or would prefer to resolve it yourself, we'll leave the job at that point. The service we provide will be to spend up to four

hours investigating and clearing the blockage to restore flow in the pipe; it won't be to repair the drain. If the pipework is broken, you may be insured and may want to contact your insurer to have the drain repaired.

5.12 Protection against flooding from public sewers

We aim to make sure there's sufficient capacity in our sewer systems to protect homes from sewer flooding. Unfortunately during severe storms, the amount of rainfall entering the sewers can exceed the capacity of the pipes and result in sewer flooding. This type of flooding is referred to as hydraulic overloading.

Over the past few years the amount of rainwater entering our sewers has been increasing, often as a result of paving over front gardens and covering over grassed areas which previously allowed rainwater to naturally drain into the ground. There has also been an increasing trend towards more intense short duration rain storms which increase the speed that rainwater gets into the sewers and increases the chance that sewer capacity will be exceeded.

We plan to protect areas at high risk of flooding due to hydraulic overloading following heavy rainfall, but there may still be occasions during extreme weather when it's not physically possible for the sewerage system to cope with the volume of flow. Sewer flooding can also happen when pipes block, collapse or are affected by backing up when pumping stations breakdown. Around 80% of flooding problems are caused by these types of problems.

Most flooding incidents caused by blockages are a result of the wrong things being flushed down toilets, such as nappies, sanitary products and cleaning wipes, or where fat, oil and grease are poured down kitchen sinks (see section 5.9). These types of problems will often result in smells or can affect toilet flushing. If you need to report a flooding problem please call our Customer Service Centre on [0345 450 9549](tel:03454509549).

Where the incident disrupts service or causes flooding to property, we'll aim to arrive as soon as possible. We will attend within six hours but during times of exceptionally heavy rainfall, when there are a large number flooding incidents, it may take a little longer.

We will give you a named contact if you've suffered internal flooding, as well as more information which explains what happens next and our responsibilities. We'll also provide an explanation of the cause of the flooding within 10 working days.

We are not legally liable for loss or damage caused by flooding from public sewers unless we've been negligent. If you're affected by flooding and it has resulted in loss or damage to your property, your insurance company should be able to help. If you're not insured or you're facing hardship because of an incident, then please get in touch and we'll try to help. However, it's your responsibility to be properly and adequately insured.

We'll make sure the problem is dealt with quickly and that we do as much as we can to help afterwards. In nearly all circumstances we'll give you practical advice and help to clear up any mess. We will offer to carry out a basic clean up as a gesture of goodwill, as long as it can be done without contaminating or damaging any of your personal belongings.

If your property is flooded internally from the public sewerage system then you'll be entitled to a payment which may be a full refund of your sewerage charge for the year, from a minimum of £150 up to a maximum of £1,000. You'll receive an amount that matches the sewerage charges for your property.

If you've suffered external sewer flooding from the public sewerage system in your garden or driveway then you'll be entitled to a payment, which may be 50% of your sewerage charge, from a minimum of £75 to a maximum of £500. Please see section 9 for more information on our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

For more information on sewer flooding please visit the FAQ section of our website at www.severntrentconnect.com/household-customers/faqs/.

5.13 Pollutions from wrong connections

We will investigate pollution reports affecting local watercourses which are caused by incorrect connections to the sewer and these can take a considerable amount of time

to investigate. It is important that connections are made to the correct type of sewer. For example, pollution can arise if foul flows are connected into surface water drains or sewers which then run into local watercourses.

Most problems are associated with the installation of washing machines or dishwashers, where outlet pipes are accidentally connected to a surface water drain instead of the foul drain. Chemicals and food waste can then contaminate the watercourse and affect water quality. Wrong connections can also occur from extensions when new toilets and sinks are incorrectly connected to the surface water drain.

If you are making any new connection to the foul drain/sewer or surface water drain/sewer, please ensure that the connection is to the correct drain/sewer. Information on how to correctly install a washing machine or dishwasher will be included in the device's instruction leaflets, and your local council will be able to advise you about any building regulation requirements concerning building drainage.

5.14 New sewer connections

You're entitled to have your drain or sewer connected to our public sewer network, as long as it meets certain practical requirements. There will be a charge for this service which is explained below. It's your responsibility to make sure the location and depth of the sewer is correct to ensure a connection is viable.

5.15 Connection to an existing public sewer

Before connecting, you'll need to give us details of the drain or sewer to be connected, where you intend to connect it to and how the connection will be made. We'll let you know within 21 days whether your proposals are acceptable. We can refuse a connection if it is not suitable for our sewer and we'll explain the reason for any refusal. For example, we won't agree to connect a foul drain to a surface water sewer and we won't allow surface water pipe to be connected to a foul sewer if there's a suitable surface water sewer available. If you disagree with our decision, you can appeal to our regulator, Ofwat whose contact details can be found in section 3.2.

For each new sewer connection you'll have to pay:

- **An Assessment Fee:** This covers our cost to assess your connection proposals, inspection of the work (excluding weekends and a maximum of two inspections) and, where relevant, transferring responsibility for the lateral drain or sewer to us.

Once you've received approval you should give us two days' notice of the day when you or your builder proposes to do the work.

5.16 Sewer connections requiring a new public sewer

We may not have a suitable existing sewer for you to connect your property to, or it may require access across private land. In these circumstances, you and your neighbours, or the district council, can ask us to provide a suitable sewer for you to connect to and, where practicable, we'll do so. If a new sewer is needed, we aim to install it within six months (or a longer period may be agreed) after an agreement is reached to pay any difference between the income we receive from sewerage charges in respect of these properties and our reasonable costs in providing the sewer. Payment can either be as a lump sum contribution towards the cost of the work or staged payments over a period of up to 12 years. Both these payment options are based upon a statutory formula. We'll also want some security from you before doing the work.

If we fail to meet this deadline and you sustain loss or damage as a result, you may have a legal claim against us. Any dispute may be referred to Ofwat. Further information on this can be obtained from our Developer Services Team (call **0345 450 9549** or email: developer@severntrentconnect.com).

5.17 Building over/close to a public sewer

Building close to or over a public sewer without getting our formal approval is illegal and it may also jeopardise the future sale of your property.

We're responsible for public sewers within our area and many public sewers which cross private land. We have to make sure that development is not carried out that

could damage a public sewer, cause risk of flooding or restrict our access for maintenance.

Wherever possible we prefer to avoid the need to build over or close to a sewer by repositioning the proposed development or diverting the sewer. Please refer to the Sewers For Adoption website (<http://sfa.wrcplc.co.uk/standards>) for guidance on the standards we require you to adhere to.

However, there are some cases where the risk to the public sewer is small and where diversion is not possible, that we can allow building over or close to a sewer.

If you're unsure whether your building works affect a public sewer you can find out by contacting our Developer Services Team (Telephone [0345 450 9549](tel:03454509549) or email developer@severntrentconnect.com).

5.18 Provision of a public sewer where there are environmental or amenity problems

Since 1 April 1996, sewerage authorities have had a duty to provide a suitable public sewer for domestic purposes to properties, which are not currently connected directly or indirectly to public sewers. This duty applies where:

- The existing private drainage is causing or is likely to cause environmental or amenity problems; and
- Provision of a public sewer is a more appropriate cost beneficial solution compared to provision of a private option

Such applications will be assessed using the criteria set out in the guidance notes issued by Defra. Where our investigations show that the qualifying criteria are not met, we'll explain the reasons why we've rejected your application. Where the criteria are met, the cost of providing a suitable public sewerage system connected to your property will be funded by us as part of our investment programme.

If you would like to make an application for the provision of a public sewer under this duty, or find out more details about it, please contact our Developer Services Team (call [0345 450 9549](tel:03454509549) or email developer@severntrentconnect.com).

5.19 Infrastructure Charges

We calculate infrastructure charges on a site specific basis. The infrastructure charge is not the same as the actual cost of making a connection. For further information please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Details on our developer charges can be found at:

www.severntrentconnect.com/developer

5.20 Sewage treatment

The sewers bring domestic and industrial effluents to sewage works for treatment and safe disposal to rivers. The treated sewage effluent discharged from our treatment works must comply with statutory conditions set by the Environment Agency (EA). The EA checks to make sure that we meet these conditions and enters the results of its samples into a public register. You can find out more about the EA in section 3.3.

All sewage sludge, the by-product of sewage treatment, must be disposed of in accordance with statutory requirements and Government licenses. We operate our works in accordance with good practice but sewage can smell. We try to limit the smell as much as possible but cannot guarantee to eliminate it altogether. If we're causing you a nuisance, please contact our Customer Service Centre.

5.21 Removal of rainwater (surface water drainage)

Most properties are connected to our sewers for taking away rainwater. Where no rainwater drains into our sewers, the rainwater will drain into a watercourse or soakaway.

If you believe rainwater from your property doesn't drain to our sewers, please contact us to discuss this further. You'll need to tell us what the drainage arrangements are for your property.

We'll then check our records or visit your property. If you're eligible for a reduction the rebate will apply from 1st April in the financial year when you make your application.

6 Our pipelaying powers on private land

This section is our Code of Practice regarding pipe-laying on private land. It sets out good practice with regard to our powers and duties when we lay or carry out work on pipes on private land, or do work to prevent contamination of the water in our network.

It also explains what you (the landowner and/ or occupier) are entitled to expect. It has been prepared under section 182 of the Water Industry Act 1991 (the Act) and has the approval of the Secretary of State. The Act allows, and in some cases requires, us to do these works. It also sets out some rules for us to follow when we lay, alter or maintain pipes and their associated accessories.

6.1 Planning a route

Before we lay a pipe we need to plan a route. We consider many aspects including:

- The directness of possible routes
- The cost (both of laying and of maintaining the pipe)
- The amount of any compensation which we may have to pay
- The disruptive effect of the work (to traffic, businesses and individuals)
- Engineering considerations including access for construction work
- Existing underground and overhead equipment
- The desirability of achieving gravity flow
- The avoidance of sites of environmental and archaeological importance.

As a result we may have to lay pipes in land which is in private ownership or occupation. Where that is the case we will consult with you and, by the use of good working practice, seek to minimise the damage. We will carry out a reinstatement after our work so that the land is restored to its original condition. Where this is not practicable, compensation is payable for loss or damage caused by the work. Compensation may also be payable for any sterilisation of land incurred as part of the work. You may be able to appoint a land agent to act on your behalf in these matters.

We will comply with this Code wherever it is possible and reasonably practicable to do so. If we cannot do so we will always explain why. We will also comply with any other relevant legislation. This Code does not affect any other rights or powers that you or

we may have. Certain provisions of this Code are not applicable to the laying of pipes within developers' sites. In particular paragraphs relating to the timing of the work, record of condition of land and topsoil, and those relating to reinstatement do not apply. Similarly certain provisions may not apply when we do work on a service pipe. You should also note that although the Code is not required to apply to work done in connection with surveying and trial holes we will, nevertheless, comply with its provisions where applicable.

6.2 Surveying and trial holes

Once we are aware of the requirement for a new pipeline we may need to survey possible routes. This is so that we can work out the best route and the method by which to lay the pipe. If we need to make any experimental trial holes or carry out any boring so we can determine the nature of soils and geology below the surface of your land we will advise you. Unless it is an emergency, or we have agreed a shorter period, we will give you a minimum of seven days' notice of our entry. We will disturb the land as little as possible. If we are unable to fill in any holes immediately we will secure them and/or fence them off. Some boreholes may be left with temporary equipment to enable groundwater levels to be checked periodically. If this is the case then details will be agreed with you. If we need to make any experimental trial holes or carry out boring to determine the nature of soils, compensation can be claimed for any temporary losses as a result of the work to the land.

6.3 Consultation and notice of work

We're required to give you formal notice of our intention to carry out work on your land. The notice has to be in writing and will normally be accompanied by a plan. These documents will give you information about the location of the proposed works, the approximate extent of the working area and when we intend to do the work. It's a good idea to store the notice safely with your records so that future buyers of the property are aware of the pipe and apparatus. We'll also give you notice of our point of entry. We always try to contact you before we issue the notice and, unless it's in response to a requisition, we'll give you at least three months' notice.

If the work involves alterations to an existing pipe then, unless it's an emergency, we'll give you at least 42 days' notice. In other circumstances, e.g. if we wish to inspect,

carry out routine maintenance (including cleanse), repair or adjust, we'll give reasonable notice which will normally be at least seven days (unless you agree to a shorter period).

6.4 Contacts

Before the work commences we will give you the name, workplace address and telephone number of the person responsible for supervising the work. Normally they will be available during working hours. We will also give you an emergency telephone number for use outside normal working hours or if your normal contact is unavailable.

If you have a general query about pipelaying, please call our Customer Service helpline on: **0345 450 9549**. Or if you would like to contact us by e-mail please use:

developer@severntrentconnect.com

6.5 Alterations to existing pipes

If the work involves alterations to an existing pipe then, unless it is an emergency, we will give you at least 3 months' notice. In other circumstances, e.g. if we wish to inspect, carry out routine maintenance (including cleanse), repair or adjust, we will give reasonable notice – this will normally be at least 21 days (unless you agree to a shorter period). We will always use our best endeavours to consult you before the notice is served, but if for any reason we have not been able to we will consult with you about what we propose to do during the notice period. During that consultation we will be asking you and other specialist organisations for information about:

- Ownership (and occupancy, if different) of the land. It would be helpful if you would tell us if there is a change of occupier or owner.
- Any proposals you have for developing the land, such as proposals for building any permanent structures or subsisting planning consents.
- Known pipes, cables, equipment or structures below the ground.
- Anything which you believe might affect the timing of our work including whether the land is subject to flooding.
- The location of springs, wells, cesspools or septic tanks or land drains and in particular any deep land drainage system.

- Any harmful materials, liquids or vegetation in the area in which we will be working, any contaminated land and if the land has been subject to any notifiable plant or animal diseases.
- Any areas with special needs, e.g. SSSIs (sites of special scientific interest), protected flora and fauna, archaeological considerations, public rights of way, trees subject to preservation orders or conservation areas.
- Planned cropping and stocking.
- Any other factor which you believe is relevant or will affect our work and for which we may have to compensate you.

6.6 Before the work occurs

We will take account of all the matters mentioned above, as well as considering any suggestions that you (and/or adjacent landowners who are affected by the scheme) have about the route of the pipe, the position of any ancillary equipment, the timing of the work, and the reinstatement of land and land drains, and discuss them with you. By the time of making the final decision about the route we will have taken into account both engineering and operational needs and the long and short term costs of the work, as well as any comments or suggestions you or your agent have made. If at this stage we are unable to meet any suggestions or objections that you have we will explain the final decision to you.

The period of notice allows time for any objections to be addressed before we start work. At the end of that time we hope that matters between us will have been agreed however, if you do not permit us access to your land in accordance with the notice we gave you, we are able to apply to a Magistrate for a warrant to do so. Once we start work we will keep as closely as possible to the notified route. If we find we are not able to do so we will consult with you. If we find that we need to make significant changes, and you are unable to agree them with us, we will serve a fresh notice. If, for any reason, the work does not start on or shortly after the proposed date, we will advise you of the amended timing. Once the proposed starting date is determined we should be able to give you a reasonable idea of how long the work will take, and also how long we anticipate any reinstatement will take. Once a statutory notice has been served, you should not do anything on the land in question that might hinder or prevent us exercising our statutory rights but you should continue your normal agricultural

operations up to the actual time of entry. It is not necessary to arrange your agricultural operations around our proposed work because it is possible that the timing could vary. If you are in doubt, please get in touch with us for advice and clarification.

6.6.1 Timing of the work

Within engineering, operational and other constraints we will do the work at the time which will cause least damage to land.

6.6.2 Compensation

If we cause any permanent loss in the value of your land as a result of the presence of our pipes, or if you will have any temporary losses or disturbance caused by the work, you may be entitled to claim compensation from us.

6.6.3 Agents

In some circumstances you may feel it is appropriate to appoint an agent, e.g. a surveyor experienced in this type of work, to act on your behalf in advising you on the work, protecting your interests and assessing and agreeing your claim for compensation. Where the work involves laying pipes we would accept that you should appoint an agent and we will pay the reasonable cost of the agent's fee after the claim has been settled. The maximum payable will be based on a standard scale of professional fees, known as Ryde's scale. If you want further information about this you should check with your agent. We would not usually pay solicitors' fees unless we ask you for a formal easement document that requires additional work.

6.6.4 Record of condition of land

We will make a full schedule of condition of the working area, including any buildings in close proximity, any accesses and any compound in respect of the proposed scheme. This may consist of (any or all of) written notes, photographs, or a video recording with verbal commentary. A copy will be sent to your agent prior to the scheme commencing (and if you do not have an agent, to you). If at that stage we have missed anything please tell us. The purpose of the record is to help both you and us check that we have restored the land to a condition as near as possible to that which existed before we started work (unless you have asked us to consider alternative proposals) and that any buildings remain in the same condition.

6.6.5 Location of pipes and equipment

Normally all our pipes are laid below ground. We prefer to lay them with 900mm minimum cover to the crown of the pipe as this protects them from frost and also from interfering with any agricultural operations. Sometimes there are engineering problems or obstacles, such as rock outcrops, which prevent this. If this happens we will advise you of the final position and depth. We may, unless otherwise agreed with

you, place permanent marker posts at field boundaries to show the location of the pipe and chambers. There are occasional instances where other locations may be unavoidable. If you have deep land drainage you should alert us to this before we start work. Generally, we put all of our pipes and accessories below ground level. However, where we need to install a manhole or other accessory that will be raised or at ground level we will try to place it in a position to minimise interference with future agricultural operations. For engineering reasons, we need to install manholes where a sewer changes direction or depth, and at regular intervals. Where we need to install an accessory at or above ground level we will always discuss this with you first. If it is necessary to have a manhole in your garden, we will always discuss its location with you, and if possible give you a choice of its final position within your garden.

6.7 Supervision during the work

We will make sure that anyone working for us on your land is properly supervised and that they have been told not to stray outside the working area. If you have told the named contact about anything that requires special attention they will ensure that it is brought to the attention of our workers who might need to take it into account. Except in an emergency, if we are working close to residential properties and need to work on bank holidays, weekends, or between the hours of 7.30pm and 7.30am, we will tell you in advance.

6.7.1 Access for owners and occupiers

We realise the importance to you of maintaining access to your property. Within reason, we will let you have access to stock or vehicles across the working area. If the location of the working area is such as to cut off access to part of your property we will discuss this with you before we commence work. If appropriate we will provide temporary foot crossings, gates, steps or stiles and discuss their location with you. We will try to keep open the existing means of access to areas cut off by the work unless it would be more appropriate to provide an alternative. Where a common access is to be used both by you and us we will endeavour to keep that access as clear as possible from mud and dust arising from our work. We will ensure that there is minimum interference with any existing means of access for emergency vehicles.

6.7.2 Access for ourselves

Normally we will gain access to our work within the working area. However, if access is required by any other route we will (unless it is an emergency) first consult you and include any additional access in the notice. We will not construct any permanent gates, steps or stiles at the boundary between your land and a highway or public path without your consent, or between your land and neighbouring land without the consent of both landowners. We will maintain public access rights.

6.7.3 Security of your property and of the working strip

Before we start work we will talk to you about the type of fencing we will use to maintain a safe and secure working area. If the working area is next to land on which livestock will remain, we will erect a suitable stock-proof fence. In these circumstances we will ensure the stock-proof fence is maintained during the course of the work (and reinstatement) and will erect straining posts at junctions of our fencing with existing fencing, and ensure both fences are secured and strained to the posts. Where livestock stray via the working area through our proven acts or omissions, we will give consideration to claims for loss or damage. For safety reasons you will not have access to the working area. However, we will ensure that, if necessary, you have access across the working area and that during the work and reinstatement the existing level of security of your property is not reduced.

6.7.4 Topsoil

We will seek to preserve the structure of the soil. When topsoil is stripped from the land we will store it separately from other excavated materials. We will not compress it with machinery. When the work is finished adequate subsoil preparation will be undertaken prior to replacing topsoil. The excavated material will be restored, as far as possible, to the condition it was prior to the work. In particular, topsoil will be replaced to the same depth it was originally and there will be no large stones excavated during the work left on the surface. If, for any reason, we are unable to return the same topsoil that was removed from your land it will, unless otherwise agreed with you, be replaced by soil of a similar nature, structure and quality.

6.7.5 Trees and hedgerows

Wherever possible we will seek to avoid felling or lopping any mature trees but if it is unavoidable we will consult you first. If the trees are subject to a preservation order

or in a conservation area we will also consult the appropriate authority and abide by its conditions. If we have felled any mature trees, they will remain your property. If you wish we will dispose of them in accordance with any reasonable requests. Work required to hedgerows will also be discussed with you. Any formal approvals will be requested from the local authority.

6.7.6 Land drainage

If you have any records of existing land drains, these should be made available to us at the earliest opportunity. We will then discuss with you the reinstatement work to any land drainage system affected by the work as in some circumstances this may need to include preliminary work before pipe-laying operations start. If we are made aware of an extensive land drainage system then prior to the work we may engage a land drainage consultant to draw up a remedial scheme. If during the work we discover a land drainage system, which you did not tell us about, we will tell you. If we disturb it, or any land drainage system that you have told us about, we will do our best to reinstate or replace it to the same standard as existed prior to the work. We will, where practicable, lay our pipe under the land drainage system. We will tell you when we are going to carry out remedial work and will give you the opportunity to inspect the site. We will make a record (which may include photographs) of any land drains disturbed and the replacement/reconnection work carried out. If you wish we will give you a copy. If we construct any land drains in locations where they did not previously exist we will discuss this with you, give you an opportunity to inspect the site and provide you with a record of the work on completion. You may wish to consider filing a copy with the deeds.

6.7.7 Watercourses

Where our pipe crosses beneath a watercourse, it will be laid in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Agency and Internal Drainage Boards. In the absence of such requirements the top of the pipe will be at least 300mm below the original cleared bottom of the watercourse and will be covered by concrete. If our work affects any watercourse we will discuss our proposals with you, and we will ensure that it remains in as effective a condition for land drainage after the conclusion of the work as it was before. We will take precautions to ensure the watercourse is not adversely affected during the construction work.

6.7.8 Water supplies and other services

If we interrupt or accidentally damage any water supplies or other services in our working area, we will repair the damage, or provide an adequate alternative as soon as reasonably practicable. We will also take all reasonable steps to ensure that our work does not pollute any water supplies or watercourses. If there appears to be any possibility of interference with private water supplies, such as wells or springs, we will arrange and bear the cost of samples being analysed to determine quality, and for levels in wells and flows from springs to be recorded and agreed before and after the work, provided you have drawn this need to our attention in adequate time. Troughs, standpipes or field supplies located within the working area will be moved to a new, temporary or agreed permanent location.

6.7.9 Area affected by disease

If you advise us that the area in which we have to work is infected by a disease notifiable under the Animal Health Act 1981 (e.g. foot and mouth) we will follow the requirements of Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). If we have to make an emergency entry, we will take all necessary precautions. If Defra has imposed requirements to avoid spreading soil-borne pests and diseases we will comply with them.

6.7.10 Fishing and sporting rights

Neither our staff nor our agents will be allowed to carry firearms on the working area. We will not bring animals onto the site (with the possible exception of guard dogs, subject to the Guard Dogs Act 1975). If there are fishing or sporting rights adjacent to the working area we will use reasonable endeavours to see that our work minimises any interference with the enjoyment of them.

6.7.11 Facilities for our workers

If we bring any huts or caravans on to the working area on your land they will not, except where there is a security risk, be used for overnight accommodation without your permission. We will provide sanitary equipment for the convenience of our workers.

6.7.12 Private agreements

If you make any agreements directly with our contractors you should note that we will not be responsible for any consequences nor intervene in any such agreement made between you and the contractor.

6.7.13 Explosives

If we have to store or use explosives we will give you notice and tell you the periods when the explosions may be expected. We will not use explosives on weekends, bank holidays or between the hours of 7:30pm and 7:30am unless it is essential and is unlikely to cause you any significant disturbance.

6.7.14 Cathodic protection

If we provide cathodic protection for any part of our equipment we will also take steps, where necessary, to safeguard buildings and structures near our work.

6.7.15 Temporary support

If the carrying out of our work means that any of your buildings, structures or equipment may need temporary underpinning or support, we will consult you. We will then provide the necessary protection and support.

6.7.16 Fossils and articles discovered

If we discover any coins, fossils or other articles during our work we will inform you and the appropriate archaeological body. We will not retain them or lay any claim to them. We have a legal obligation to have regard to the protection and conserving of objects of archaeological interest. Accordingly, we may employ or involve an archaeologist to examine the work as they progress. This will, however, be discussed with you first.

6.8 Reinstatement after the work

In doing our work we will try to do as little damage as possible. Temporary damage, such as topsoil stripping, may take place in order to allow good working practice and reinstatement. At the completion of the work we will restore the area where we have

worked to the same condition that it was in before we started. On the occasions that this is not reasonably possible we will pay compensation to reflect the depreciation in the value of the land. We will remove all tools and equipment and any contaminants brought to the site, and take away any surplus excavated material unless you ask us not to and we are legally able to comply with such a request. The site will be left clean and tidy. Before we hand the working area back to you we will arrange a joint inspection to ensure satisfaction. If we have damaged or removed any fence, bank or wall we will repair or replace it as necessary. If we have damaged a hedge we will replant it with an appropriate species and erect a secure, protective fence to allow the hedge to become established. Alternatively we will pay compensation. The contractor's maintenance period is normally 12 months from the completion of the pipe-laying. If the work has been in a garden we do our best to ensure that the reinstated garden matches the unaffected garden. If necessary, we will employ an accredited garden landscaper for the reinstatement work. Where this is not practical, or if you prefer, compensation will be agreed for you to carry out the work yourself. In the event that a land drainage system is not adequately reinstated we may seek the advice of an independent land drainage specialist. Alternatively, compensation may be paid.

6.8.1 Information

We will inform you in writing of the position and depth of the pipe (if less than 900mm) and the extent of the land (the sterilised area) which needs protection. These details should be kept with the deeds to your property. The width of the area will be kept to the minimum possible and will be sufficient for us to gain access and work on the pipe if required. In order to avoid damage to the pipe and to allow us access we will give you information on any activities which should not be carried out without our express permission in that area. This will include planting of certain types of trees or erecting buildings but will not prevent normal agricultural operations.

6.8.2 Compensation

If we have caused permanent loss in the value of your land as a result of the presence of our pipes, or if you have suffered temporary losses or disturbance caused by the work, you may be entitled to compensation; also if you have suffered damage to your property that we have not been able to put right. You should note that disturbance compensation will only be paid for items that are directly and unavoidably incurred as a result of our work. If you experience significant disturbance you should, at the time of the disturbance, keep your contact informed and let him know if you are likely to incur additional costs. It is in your own interest to keep a diary of events. If you have appointed an agent they will prepare and negotiate your claim for you. Your claim will be treated confidentially. If you or your agent asks us in writing, we will pay an advance of 90% of our assessment of your loss within three months of receipt of your quantified claim and evidence of your entitlement interest may be payable on your claim. Your agent will be able to advise you about this. If after negotiating with us the level of compensation cannot be agreed the matter can be referred to the Lands Tribunal (or some other form of independent alternative dispute resolution agreed between us). However, we will not pay your agent's fees to prepare your case. It is up to the Tribunal to decide if, and how, costs should be awarded. If in the future you wish to develop the land the Act makes provision for you to ask us to alter or remove the pipe at your expense. If the request is not unreasonable, we have a duty to comply.

6.8.3 Complaints

When we are working on your land we aim to cause minimum disruption and inconvenience. We expect our workers and contractors working for us to be polite, considerate and helpful. If you have a problem, in the first instance, please get in touch with the named contact. If you are unable to resolve the matter to your satisfaction please see Section 8 of this document for information on our policy for dealing with complaints.

7 Your Water Bill

To make it easier for our customers, at sites where we only provide a sewerage service, we have arranged for the water services provider to bill for wastewater services on our behalf. This means that those customers at our Wellesley site will receive a single bill instead of two bills, one for each service. To find out information about their bill our Wellesley customers should refer to the South East Water website at: www.southeastwater.co.uk.

7.1 Bills for unmetered customers

If you are an unmetered customer your bill will be calculated based on the Rateable Value (RV) of your property. Your local council valuation office calculated your RV based on location, floor space and number of rooms but they aren't required to hold the records of your original RV or to consider any appeals. We only have details of the final RV figure and this varies from property to property so your RV could be different to your neighbours'. However, if your property has had a change of use, the RV might not be appropriate anymore and so we may need to make a change to your basis of charge. We'll normally calculate the annual charges as follows:

- For sewerage services, by multiplying the RV of the premises by a rate in the pound based on the foul sewage service that the property receives.
- There is also a fixed charge for Surface Water and Highway Drainage. Where a property does not have any surface water draining to the public sewer a reduced rate will be applied.

7.2. Bills for metered customers

If you are a metered customer your bill will be made up of three elements: water supply, used water and surface water drainage. Water supply and used water charges are based on the volume of water used. This is measured in cubic metres (m³); 1m³ is equal to 220 gallons or 1000 litres of water. The amount used is calculated as the difference between two meter readings. For business customers the variable charge is dependent on the volume of water used.

There is a fixed charge which covers the taking away and treatment of Surface Water (rain water) and Highway Drainage. Where a property does not have any Surface Water draining to the public sewer a reduced rate will be applied. Surface water drainage charges are levied for the removal and treatment of surface water or rainwater from the property.

7.3 Bills for assessed volume customers

Assessed volume charges apply in the following circumstances:

- Where there is no longer an appropriate rateable value for the property (for example where it has been substantially altered).
- Where you or a previous occupier has requested a meter but it has not been possible to install one because it wasn't practicable or it would have involved unreasonable expense, and either you or the previous occupier opted to pay assessed volume charges instead of unmeasured charges.
- Where following several visits and written requests it has not been possible for your water supplier to gain access to install, read or maintain the meter.

For household properties, these charges are fixed based either on the number of bedrooms present in a property or the single occupier tariff.

For non-household properties, the charge is based on our assessment of the volume of water used. This assessment is based on a combination of the nature of the business and the number of full time (or equivalent) employees. The assessed consumption figure is then multiplied by the relevant volumetric charge. There is also a Fixed Charge relevant to the tariff banding. In addition business assessed customers pay a wastewater fixed charge based on water supply pipe size.

7.4 Current charges

For full details of our charges please see our Charges Scheme available at:

www.severntrentconnect.com/charges

7.5 How can I pay my bill?

You can pay your bill by the following options:

- Direct debit – sign up on-line at www.severntrentconnect.com
- Debit card on-line
- Cheque payment
- Home banking

If you live at Wellesley and South East Water bill you on our behalf please visit their website at www.southeastwater.co.uk for more information.

7.5.1 Can I pay directly from my benefits?

If you have arrears and you receive Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Universal Credit or Pension Credit, the JobCentre Plus (previously known as the Benefits Agency) may be able to arrange for your bill to be paid out of your benefits directly to us. Please contact us on **0247 771 5904** for more information.

Paying this way means:

- You won't have to remember to make payments.
- You pay in a convenient way for no extra cost.
- We won't take further recovery action.

If you've already contacted the JobCentre Plus offices for help, please let us know.

7.6 I'm moving house, what do I do?

If you're moving house, you can let us know up to 28 days in advance by contacting us either via our website (www.severntrentconnect.com/contact-us) or by calling our Customer Contact Centre. For customers receiving a bill from South East Water, please contact them direct on **0333 000 0001**.

7.7 What if I have a dispute about my bill?

If the bill is for someone who lived in your property before you did, or if someone else was responsible for paying the bill for some of the time the bill covers, contact us as soon as you get the bill. If your bill is addressed to 'the occupier' please let us know so that we can update the details and sort out any issues. We might ask for proof of the date you moved in to the property so that we can update our records. We'll look into any issue, complaint or dispute you have and we'll follow the process detailed within our Complaints Procedure (section 10). Whilst we're investigating your dispute, we won't take any further action. For customers receiving a bill from South East Water, please contact them direct on [0333 000 0001](tel:0333 000 0001).

7.8 WaterSure – are any bill reductions available for vulnerable customers?

If you use a lot of water because you have a large family or someone in your household has a medical condition, and you are on a low income, our WaterSure scheme could help. It's a statutory scheme that offers you a capped charge for metered water services. You can qualify for a reduced rate if you pay for your water based on a meter reading and someone in your house is receiving any of these benefits:

- Council Tax Benefit Child Tax Credit (except in receipt of the family element only)
- Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, or Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance

You must also have either:

- three or more dependent children under the age of 19 years living at the property,

Or

- you or someone else living at the property must have a medical condition requiring high water usage.

South East Water currently administer the scheme on our behalf for our Wellesley customers, please contact them direct [0333 000 0001](tel:03330000001) for more information on the scheme and how to apply.

7.9 As a tenant, when am I responsible for paying the bill?

If you live in rented accommodation, it's not always easy to understand who is legally responsible for the bill. Our wastewater charges are usually payable by the person who lives in the property and uses the wastewater services, unless you have a specific agreement with your landlord which you can provide proof of. Unless your landlord has entered into an agreement with us accepting responsibility for our charges, this means that you have to pay the bill. If you have any problems or if your bill is for a previous tenant, please call us straight away.

7.10 As a landlord, when am I responsible for paying the bill?

You're responsible for paying water charges if you don't have a tenant or if you have agreed with us and your tenant that you will pay the bill.

7.11 What will happen if I don't pay?

If you don't pay your bill, or don't keep to a payment arrangement that we have agreed with you, we'll take the following steps to recover the debt:

Step 1

We'll send you a minimum of two written notices and attempt to call you to advise you of the debt. How quickly we do this will depend on whether you've kept up with payments in the past.

Step 2

If you still don't pay and you haven't contacted us to reach an agreement to pay, we'll ask the County Court to issue a claim against you for the debt. This means that legal costs (a minimum of £75) may be added to the amount you already owe us. We may seek to recover interest on the debt, through the County Court, at a rate of 8% from the date that the charges were originally due for payment up to the claim issue date.

Step 3

If you still don't pay or contact us, we may seek a County Court judgement against you. This will mean that further legal costs may be added to the amount that you owe (minimum £22) depending on the outcome of the claim. In addition, further interest at a rate of 8% may be levied from the date of the claim to the date that a judgment is entered against you which will be added to the amount that you owe. Your credit rating may be affected at this stage which may affect your ability to obtain credit in the future.

Step 4

If you don't keep to the arrangement to pay as ordered by the court, we will take steps to recover the amount you owe. We may:

- Ask the court to order you to attend your local court to give information about your finances.
- Take a deduction from your income. The court will contact your employer to arrange deductions.
- Issue a warrant instructing a bailiff to enter your property and take your goods.
- Make a charge on your property if you own your home. This will mean we'll advise the mortgage lender of the debt and could force you to sell your property.

7.12 Do you use debt collection agencies?

Yes, we may decide to use debt collection agencies at any stage in the debt recovery process. If we refer your account to a debt collection agency, working on our behalf, to determine your circumstances and/or collect the outstanding charges a fee of £39 may be added to your account at the point of receipt by the debt collection agency to compensate us for costs incurred in collecting outstanding charges. Any agents we

use are subject to our standards of service and behaviour, as set out in section 9 - Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

Our agents are regulated by Financial Conduct Authority Handbook and they operate a Code of Practice set by the Credit Services Association. If you have a complaint about our agents you should contact us directly.

7.13 Bailiffs

Bailiffs are employed by the County Court and keep to the County Court standards and procedures. If you have a complaint about the Bailiffs please contact your local County Court.

7.14 Who else can you contact for help and advice

7.14.1 Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) service is an independent charity which provides free confidential, independent and impartial advice on a wide range of problems. Expert advisers can help you to sort out your debts. If you have other problems, such as illness, redundancy or divorce, the adviser may also be able to help you or they may tell you where you can get help.

The CAB can check if you are entitled to any extra income. They can also help you work out and negotiate repayment plans with the people you owe money to. The repayment plans will be based on what you can realistically afford to pay after your essential living costs have been met. On your first visit, please take with you all the relevant details of your income and how much you spend. The CAB will contact us via a dedicated helpline to arrange a suitable payment arrangement on your behalf. To find your nearest CAB, look in your local phone book, enquire at your local library or visit citizensadvice.org.uk.

7.14.2 Consumer Credit Counselling Service

Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS) is a registered charity, dedicated to providing confidential, free counselling and money management assistance to financially distressed families and individuals.

Call StepChange on **0800 138 1111** or visit www.stepchange.org. They offer a wide range of services, including welfare benefit checks, mortgage counselling, self-employed assistance and bankruptcy services. They offer free, confidential and impartial advice available over the telephone (freephone 8am-8pm) or online via their website. StepChange can help you prioritise your debts and set up structured repayment plans with the option of making one monthly payment.

7.14.3 Other debt counselling services

The National Debtline (call **0808 808 4000** or visit www.nationaldebtline.co.uk) and some Money Advice Centres (which can be found in the Yellow Pages) provide a free debt counselling advice service. Please check the service is free before using it. Neighbourhood Offices can often help with debt problems too (check under your local council in the phone book). You can also ask Social Services for help. They are unlikely to give you any money, but might be able to help in other ways.

7.14.4 Consumer Council for Water (CCWater)

The Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) is there to review all issues that affect your interests as a water customer, liaise with us and make representations on your behalf. CCWater staff can give you free, independent advice on issues that affect you as a water customer and they will investigate any complaints that you can't resolve directly with us through our own complaints procedures. They will also advise you if the matter you have raised is a dispute that can be settled by our regulator, the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat). You can contact CCWater at:

Consumer Council for Water
1st Floor Victoria Square House
Victoria Square,
Birmingham
B2 4AJ
Tel: **0300 034 2222**
Website: www.ccwater.org.uk

7.15 Will you share my data?

We may share information with Credit Reference Agencies to enable us to manage our customers' accounts as efficiently as possible and keep our records up to date. This

will help with fraud prevention and may improve your credit rating. We may also register a default against you with the Credit Reference Agencies for non-payment, this will mean that your data will be shared with the Credit Reference Agencies. Your data will only be shared for debt recovery purposes.

8 What to do if you are unhappy with our service

We aim to get things right first time, every time, but we know that sometimes things can go wrong. Even if you aren't a customer, you can tell us about an issue or make a complaint. We're always looking for ways to improve the service we provide, so please let us know if we could do better.

8.1 If you want to make a complaint, what should you do?

We know that if something goes wrong, you want us to resolve it quickly and accurately. Our contact centre advisors are the best people to do this. They'll be able to explain what's happened and what we'll do to resolve the problem. If you decide to make a complaint we'll follow our complaints procedure which ensures that you're treated fairly. There are four stages to the procedure which are explained in this section.

Stage 1

If there is any part of our service that you are not happy with please contact us straight away so that we can understand what the problem is and make sure it is resolved to your satisfaction. You can either call our Customer Service Centre on **0345 450 9549** or email us at customer@severntrentconnect.com.

Our contact centre is manned by specialist staff trained in a particular area of our business. This makes sure that you get to speak to someone who has the best experience to deal with your issue or complaint. If you aren't completely satisfied after speaking to an advisor, our Duty Managers are always available. They will be happy to help you by continuing the call or arranging to call you back at a convenient time.

Stage 2

If your problem is not fully resolved and you have to contact us again about the same issue, your complaint will be escalated to a Senior Manager for resolution. We will investigate what has happened to understand why you have had to contact us again and ensure you are fully satisfied with the outcome.

Stage 3

If you feel that we have still not been able to resolve your query then you can refer the matter to the Consumer Council for Water (CCW), the independent customer body for the Water industry, to investigate your complaint. CCW's primary functions are:

- to provide advice and represent consumers on water matters and sewerage
- to investigate and handle complaints made against licensed water suppliers or companies in England and Wales
- to take up consumers' complaints if they have tried and failed to resolve issues with their water companies
- to make sure that the voice of consumers' is heard and that consumers remain at the heart of the water industry

You can contact CCW at:

Consumer Council for Water

1st Floor Victoria Square House,

Victoria Square

Birmingham

B2 4AJ



0300 034 2222



enquiries@ccwater.org.uk



www.cewater.org.uk

Stage 4

On very rare occasions, a complaint may remain unresolved after it has gone through all the stages of our and the Consumer Council for Water's complaints procedures. At this point, you are able to take your concerns to the Water Industry Redress Scheme (WATRS), who can provide an independent binding decision. You can contact WATRS at:

WATRS
70 Fleet Street
London
EC4Y 1EU



0207 520 3801



info@watrs.org



www.watrs.org

8.2 What happens if you have a dispute?

We understand that if something goes wrong you want us to resolve it quickly. If you make a complaint we will follow our complaints procedure.

CCWater will review all issues that affect your interests as a water customer, liaising with us and making representations on your behalf. If you feel you need to contact CCWater, their staff can give you free, independent advice on issues that affect you as a water customer and they will investigate any complaints that you can't resolve

directly with us through our complaints procedures. They will also advise you if the matter you have raised is a dispute that can be settled by our regulator, Ofwat.

There are certain types of dispute where Ofwat can decide the outcome and certain types where an independent arbitrator can be appointed. Ofwat can settle:

- Any dispute about whether or not you are entitled to a payment under the Guaranteed Service Standards scheme.
- The terms and conditions for a non-domestic supply – Disputes regarding requisitioning of public sewers (including public lateral drains), for example:
- Any dispute about the amount we ask you to pay or the undertakings or securities we expect you to give.
- Any dispute about our proposal to extend to greater than six months the period which we are given to provide a public sewer after you ask for it, or about the places where private drains and sewers will connect with the public sewer.
- Any appeals about the adoption of sewers or sewage works and certain other sewerage disputes. These can include disputes about your right to make a physical connection to such sewers, our request for alterations to a proposed drainage system or our decision to close or place restrictions on the use of a public sewer.
- The charges or disconnection costs that must be paid to a company before a business customer's supply is reconnected.
- A refusal to allow private sewers and drains to be connected to public sewers, or a requirement to inspect the drain or sewer before allowing a connection.
- The costs and security a company asks for when it connects premises to a sewer.
- The charges and conditions for providing a sewer (requisition).
- A proposal or refusal to adopt sewers or sewage disposal works, or about the conditions in an adoption agreement.
- The position or suitability of a drain or sewer to replace an existing private drainage system which the company considers to be unsuitable.
- The effectiveness of an alternative sewer that has been provided to replace an existing one that is due to be closed.
- A requirement that a proposed drain or sewer is built so it can become part of a general sewerage system.

- Appeals from occupiers of trade premises who are not happy with a refusal or the conditions set by sewerage companies about putting their trade effluent into the public sewer.

In the case of street works, if there is a dispute about compensation after we have done work in the street and we cannot agree on an arbitrator, Ofwat can decide upon one.

8.3 When can you expect us to respond?

We'll always aim to deal with a phone complaint the first time you call us. If you make a written complaint we will ensure that we reply by phone, email or letter within ten working days of receiving it. If we don't, you could be entitled to a payment under our Guaranteed Service Standards Scheme (refer to Section 9). We can also reply to you in a number of alternative formats such as large print and Braille. Please let us know if this would be better for you.

Please note that if you ask your local MP or other elected representative to act on your behalf, we'll give a full and complete response which may include personal and/or financial information where relevant to the response, when receiving written correspondence on either official letter headed paper or sent electronically from a parliamentary email account. However, for telephone calls, we will insist on written consent from the customer prior to sharing sensitive or financial information.

8.4 Warning – bogus callers

Unfortunately there are an increasing number of incidents involving bogus callers. These are people who impersonate utility staff to gain entry and access to your home. For more information about this contact your local police service.

If a Severn Trent Connect employee or contractor asks to come into your home, they will show you a valid identification card bearing either the Severn Trent logo or their Company logo, their name and a photograph. You can check their identity by calling [0345 450 9549](tel:0345 450 9549) and we will confirm if they are genuine. Do not call any other number they give you or accept any excuses. If you are in any doubt, do not let them in. We also use a third party to undertake water quality sampling at our customers properties and

we will notify you in advance if we are planning to visit to take a sample from your water supply.

8.5 Bogus callers – our password protection scheme

Bogus callers can have a devastating effect. In an effort to combat this we operate a free doorstep password protection scheme which is available to all our customers. This scheme allows you to protect yourself by registering a password of your choice. It is easy to register and your password will be safe and only known to us. If you are interested in registering for this scheme, please contact us.

8.6 Don't let them in

Bogus callers are people who trick their way into people's homes looking to steal valuables and cash. They are normally well organised and work in teams and are very convincing, often using excuses based on panic to gain entry to your home.

8.7 Beware of certain phrases

Bogus callers often claim they are from the 'water board' and may wear uniforms and fake ID badges. They can be very convincing so be careful who you let into your home. Beware certain phrases:

"Your water may be contaminated! You need to run your taps."

"Your neighbour is having a flood and we need to turn the water off."

"We need to come in and check that your water is still working ok."

None of our genuine representatives would ask to enter your property with these excuses and you are not obliged to let them into your home.

8.8 Individual needs

We offer a range of individual services that may be helpful to you. Please call us for further information. The service we offer are:

- Correspondence in large print, Braille, electronic or audio formats

- Bill reading service
- Textphone service
- Confidential password to help identify our staff who may call at your door.

9 Guaranteed Services Standards

This section sets out our Code of Practice relating to our Guaranteed Service Standards and is applicable to domestic and business customers. This section includes detailed information on the circumstances, amounts and timescales that we'll pay you in if we've failed to meet one of our standards. We hope you've found this information useful. If you have any more questions please visit our website at www.severntrentconnect.com or contact us on 0345 450 9549.

We work hard to ensure that we deliver an excellent service to you. We back this up with service guarantees and payments to you if we fail to meet the required standard. Some of our guarantees are set by Government regulations but we also have our own guarantees to make sure that we focus on services which you have told us you value most.

9.1 Telling us about our service

We aim to provide an excellent customer service so please get in touch with us if something is wrong. We are here to help, even if you just need some information. If our service falls short of your expectations, we want you to tell us. We welcome comments from you that allow us to learn and improve and we want to deal with things quickly and effectively.

9.2 What are the guarantees of service to you?

We work hard to ensure that we deliver an excellent service to you. We back this up with service guarantees and payments to you if we fail to meet the required standard. All of our guarantees are detailed on the following pages.

Customer contacts

Guaranteed service standard	Payment to you if we do not meet the standard	Payment to you if we fail to pay on time	Times when we won't pay
<p>Making and keeping written/telephone appointments</p> <p>If you need an appointment with us we promise to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer you an a.m. or p.m. appointment or, if you request it, an appointment within a two-hour time-slot. 2. Give you 24 hours' notice if we need to cancel an appointment that we have made with you. 3. Keep all non-cancelled appointments that we make with you. <p>If we do not meet these promises you may be entitled to a payment.</p>	£50 within 10 working days	£30	<p>When the appointment is not in connection with the supply of water or sewerage services.</p> <p>If you cancel the appointment, or if we cancel with more than 24 hours' notice.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).</p>

Responding to written account queries

If you write to us to query the accuracy of your bill we will provide you with a response within five working days of receiving your letter.

If we take longer than 5 working days; you may qualify for a payment

£30 within 10 working days

£30

If you do not want to continue with the enquiry.

If the enquiry is sent to the wrong company address.

If the query is frivolous.

In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).

Responding to written enquiries about our Special Assistance services

If you write to us to enquire about our Special Assistance Service, we will provide you with a response within five working days of receiving your letter.

If we take longer than 5 working days; you may qualify for a payment

£30

£30

If you do not want to continue with the enquiry.

If the enquiry is sent to the wrong company address.

If the query is frivolous.

In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).

Responding to enquiries about your water or wastewater services

If you write to us with a query about your water or waste water services we will provide you with a response within ten working days of receiving your letter.

If we take longer than 10 working days; you may qualify for a payment.

£30 within 10 days

£30

If you do not want to continue with the enquiry.

If the enquiry is sent to the wrong company address.

If the query is frivolous.

In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).

Responding to written requests to change payment method

If you ask us to change your payment method and we cannot meet your request, we will let you know why within five working days of receiving your letter.

If we take longer than 5 working days; you may qualify for a payment.

£30 within 10 working days

£30

If you do not want to continue with the enquiry.

If the enquiry is sent to the wrong company address.

If the query is frivolous.

In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).

Responding to written complaints

If you make a written complaint about our water or waste water services we will respond within 10 working days of receiving your letter.

If we take longer than 10 working days; you may qualify for a payment.

£30 within 10 days

£30

If you do not want to continue with the complaint.

If the enquiry is sent to the wrong company address.

If the query is frivolous.

In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).

Constancy of supply

Guaranteed service standard	Payment to you if we do not meet the standard	Payment to you if we fail to pay on time	Times when we won't pay
<p>Incidences of low water pressure</p> <p>We guarantee to provide a minimum pressure in the water mains to maintain an adequate supply of water to your property.</p> <p>If the pressure falls below seven metres static head for at least an hour, and this happens twice within any 28-day period, we will make an automatic payment to your account.</p> <p>If you experience a problem with your water pressure please call our customer service centre on 0345 450 9549.</p>	£30	£30	<p>If your actions have caused the problem.</p> <p>If the low pressure is because of necessary works.</p> <p>If we had already made a payment within the financial year.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances (severe weather or industrial action).</p> <p>If it is impractical to identify you as being affected and you don't claim</p>

			<p>within three months of the incident.</p> <p>If we don't know about the problem.</p>
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Notice of interruption to supply

Guaranteed service standard	Payment to you if we do not meet the standard	Payment to you if we fail to pay on time	Times when we won't pay
<p>Planned interruption</p> <p>If we plan to interrupt your water supply for longer than four hours, we will advise you in writing at least 48 hours before the start of the interruption.</p> <p>If we fail to do so, we will make an automatic payment to your water account.</p> <p>In addition, we will restore the supply when we said we would, or earlier if possible.</p> <p>If we fail to do so we will make an automatic payment to your account, plus a further automatic payment for each 24-hour period that the supply remains unrestored.</p> <p>If you experience a problem with your water pressure, please call</p>	<p>Incorrect notice:</p> <p>£50</p> <p>Supply not restored - Initial period:</p> <p>£25</p> <p><i>After each further 24 hours:</i></p> <p>£15</p>	<p>£30</p> <p>£25</p>	<p>In exceptional circumstances (severe weather or industrial action).</p> <p>If it is impractical to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within three months of the incident.</p>

our customer service centre on
0345 450 9549.

Unplanned interruption

If there has been an unplanned interruption, for example because a water main has burst, we will restore your supply within 12 hours of us finding out about the interruption.

If the burst or leak is on a strategic main, we will restore your supply within 48 hours of finding out about the interruption.

If we fail to restore the supply within these timescales, we will make an automatic payment to your water account, plus a further automatic payment for each 24-hour period that the supply remains unrestored.

Initial period:

£25

*After each
further 24
hours:*

£15

£25

In exceptional circumstances (severe weather or industrial action).

If it is impractical to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within three months of the incident.

External sewer flooding

Guaranteed service standard	Payment to you if we do not meet the standard	Payment to you if we fail to pay on time	Times when we won't pay
<p>Dealing with external sewer flooding</p> <p>If you are affected by external flooding you may be entitled to a payment.</p> <p>If you need to report a flooding problem please call our Customer Service Centre on 0345 450 9549.</p>	<p>A payment that is equal to 50% of your annual sewerage charges up to a maximum of £500 (minimum £75) for each flooding incident within 20 days.</p>	<p>£30</p>	<p>If your actions have caused the problem.</p> <p>If your private drains or sewers are inadequate.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances (severe weather or industrial action).</p> <p>If it is impractical to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within three months of the incident.</p> <p>If you are not materially affected.</p> <p>If we have already made a payment for internal flooding for the same incident.</p>

Internal sewer flooding

Guaranteed service standard	Payment to you if we do not meet the standard	Payment to you if we fail to pay on time	Times when we won't pay
<p>Dealing with internal sewer flooding</p> <p>In rare circumstances some properties suffer from internal flooding from our sewers. If it is our fault you will be entitled to a payment.</p> <p>If you need to report a flooding problem please call our Customer Service Centre on 0345 450 9549.</p>	<p>A payment that is equal to your annual sewerage charges up to a maximum of £1,000 (minimum £150) for each flooding incident within 20 days.</p>	<p>£50</p>	<p>If it is impractical to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within three months of the incident.</p> <p>If your actions have caused the problem.</p> <p>If your private drains or sewers are inadequate.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances (severe weather or industrial action)</p>

9.3 How and when will we pay you?

If we are aware that we have caused a problem, we will make service guarantee payments to you automatically within 10 working days. The payment will either be credited to your wastewater services account or refunded to you. If we fail to do this we will make an additional penalty payment as detailed in the relevant GSS category above. We will pay automatically if we know that there has been a problem. If you think that you should have received a payment please contact us because we may not know about it. Please do this within three months of the problem occurring.

9.4 Circumstances when we won't make a payment

In some rare and exceptional circumstances we may not be able to meet our standards because of events that are beyond our control. If this happens our service guarantees do not apply and payments may not be due. Examples are given in Section 9.2 but if you are unsure about whether you should be paid please contact our Customer Operations Service Centre. Payments under our service guarantee scheme do not affect your legal rights and they do not mean that we admit liability.

9.5 How we review our service standards

We review our service standards each year. As part of this review, we ask a sample of customers each year what they think of our service and we also invite feedback from anyone who is not in the sample. We use the information we gather to make more improvements in our service to you. As well as the service guarantees, we have set other standards to make sure that our service is as good as you expect it to be. We continuously review these standards and compare them against other companies who provide services to you.

9.6 Our contact details

You can contact us at:

Severn Trent Connect

Severn Trent Centre

2 St.Johns Street

Coventry

CV1 2LZ



0345 450 9549



customer@severntrentconnect.com



www.severntrentconnect.com