

Code of Practice on Priority Services

Code of Practice on Priority Services

Our Priority Services Register is a free service to customers who have particular requirements because of their individual circumstances. In this leaflet we explain how you can register for our priority services and the help and support we can offer. If you need extra help, we're here to support you.

You'll find a list of our other Codes of Practice on the back of this leaflet. You can download them from our website, southwestwater.co.uk/cop, or call us on 0344 346 1010 for a free copy.

If you, or someone in your household, has a medical condition that requires constant access to a supply of water, or you'd find it difficult to reach an alternative supply during an interruption to the mains supply, or you have a particular need when contacting us, you can join our Priority Services Register.

Free services similar to our Priority Services Register are available in the gas, electricity and telephone sectors. Contact your other service providers and ask about their Priority Services Register.

What we offer our Priority Services customers

Priority support during supply interruptions

If we're going to interrupt your water supply for planned works we can:

- Telephone or visit you to discuss any help you need and advise you how to manage while work is being carried out
- Write to you to advise you of the interruption.

In the event of an emergency interruption to the supply, for example, a burst water main, our priority is to restore the supply to all customers as soon as possible. If your health, or that of someone in your household, would be put at risk by the supply interruption we'll provide you with an alternative supply.

Help if you have a water meter

If you have difficulty reading your meter, we can help in the following ways:

- **Reading your meter**
You can ask us to read your meter up to an extra four times a year if you can't easily read it yourself, for example, due to limited physical movement, problems with your eyesight, or a condition such as dyslexia. Please call our Accounts Helpline on 0344 346 1010.
- **Relocating your meter**
We'll provide advice if you need to have your meter relocated. If you ask us to move your meter to help you read it more easily, we'll consider waiving the cost of doing so. Please call our Services Helpline on 0344 346 2020.
- **Investigating unexplained water usage**
We'll make an appointment to visit you to investigate the cause of possible high levels of water usage recorded on your meter. Please call our Services Helpline.

Services for customers with specific communication needs

Bills

If you'd benefit from receiving your bill in an alternative format, we can help in the following ways:

- **Large print bills**
If you or a member of your household would prefer your bills in larger print, we can send them in this size print.
- **Braille bills**
If you or a member of your household is a Braille user, we can arrange to produce your bills in Braille.
- **Telephone bill reading**
We can read your bill over the telephone and help you understand your account so that you know exactly what to expect before you receive it. We'll try to contact you three times at different times of the day.
- **Sending bills to someone who helps you**
We can send your bills to a nominated person, for example, a carer, relative or friend, provided they agree. We'll also send you a copy of your bill as you'll still be responsible for the charges.

We can provide other information in alternative formats

We can provide the following range of important information in large print, on audio CD or in Daisy CD formats:

- Charges Scheme Summary
- Complaints and Compliments
- Getting a water meter – A quick guide
- Our Customer Promise
- Top tips for saving water in the home and in the garden.

Alternative ways to contact us if you're deaf, hard-of-hearing or have speech difficulties

You can contact us by:

- Text telephone (Minicom) free on 0800 169 9965
- NGT Text Relay.

How to join the Priority Services Register

You can register free by:

- Visiting our website www.southwestwater.co.uk/water-advice-and-services and completing the online form
- Calling our Accounts Helpline on 0344 346 1010
8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat
(You can contact us via NGT Text Relay and Minicom)
- Completing our Priority Services Registration form.

We'll treat all the information you provide in the strictest confidence and your details will only be used by members of our staff and contractors who need them to provide you with the support you require.

We'll accept applications for the Priority Services Register from account holders and nominated carers. We'll also accept applications from water re-sellers, such as sheltered accommodation providers, where the customer's consent has been given.

We aim to keep the register updated by contacting you from time to time to discuss your needs. If there's a change in your circumstances that you think we should know about, you, or someone who you've agreed can talk to us on your behalf, such as a carer, relative or friend, can contact us and we'll update the register.

Other support

Passwords

When we agree the date and time of a visit with you, you can ask for a password of your choice for our representative to use when they visit. Passwords can be either verbal or written, and can be updated at any time. We can also send you a reminder of your password before we visit.

When we visit your home

All our employees carry identification cards which display their name, photograph and our company logo. They also carry a large-print identification card and will usually be wearing a uniform. Always check a caller's identity card before letting them into your home, and if you've agreed a password, make sure that they give it to you.

Sadly there are people who pretend to work for us in order to get access to your home. We're dedicated to raising awareness of these people and the crimes they commit to help keep you safe within your home.

If your caller says they work for us but you're not sure, tell them to wait outside and call us on our Services Helpline 0344 346 2020 (for Minicom users only 0800 169 9965). Don't use any other number which the caller may give you. Our staff won't mind waiting while you call us.

It's important that you only open the door to people that you know or to someone who's made an appointment to see you by telephone or letter.

If there's a stranger at your door:

- Keep your door shut and locked and use a spy-hole or window to check who's outside
- Don't open the door if you don't recognise them or aren't expecting a visitor.

IF IN DOUBT, KEEP THEM OUT!

If you think a bogus caller may have called at your door, you should report it to the police giving them as much detail about the person as you can remember. Call 999 if you're suspicious or they won't leave or are still in the vicinity; otherwise call 101 (the non-emergency number) if you're not in immediate danger but want to report an incident.

We work alongside our local police constabulary to support them in their commitment to stamp out doorstep crime.

Help with your bill if you have a meter and use a lot of water

If you have problems paying your bill please contact our Accounts Helpline as soon as possible on 0344 346 1010. We can offer help if you have a water meter or pay the multi-occupancy assessed charge and face particular difficulties paying your bill because you have to use a lot of water for essential purposes, or have a low income.

If you receive qualifying benefits or tax credits and either have someone in your household who suffers from a medical condition which means that you use a lot of water, or have three or more children under the age of 19 for whom you receive child benefit normally living with you in the property, you may be eligible for a special tariff called WaterSure. Please call our Accounts Helpline for more information or an application form, or visit our website southwestwater.co.uk/watersure.

If you don't currently have a meter but feel you may benefit from having one, please see our [Getting a water meter – A quick guide](#) or call our Accounts Helpline.

Other financial support

If you have a very low income and receive certain benefits, you may be eligible for our WaterCare tariff. We may offer you a 15% to 50% discount off your charges depending on the level of your household income. Please call our Accounts Helpline for more information or an application form, or visit our website southwestwater.co.uk/watercarediscount.

Please let us know straight away if you have any payment problems. We can help in many different ways. You can find further information on the support we offer to customers having difficulty paying their water bills in our Code of Practice on [Payment and Debt Recovery](#) available on our website or by calling our Accounts Helpline.

The turn2us charity helps people access money available to them through welfare benefits, grants and other help. You may be able to find sources of financial support through the website www.turn2us.org.uk.

Our recreational sites

Facilities at many of our recreational sites have been designed to make sure that they're accessible to everyone.

If you'd like more information about recreational facilities offered by the South West Lakes Trust who manage the sites on our behalf, visit www.swlakestrust.org.uk or call the team on 01566 771930 and we'll send you information in the post.

Water fittings and water usage advice

If you'd like information and advice on equipment and special water fittings which would make it easier for you to use bathroom and water-using appliances in your home, contact your local social services department and ask for the occupational therapist. They may be able to provide some equipment for you free of charge, with other items available to purchase.

We can advise you on ways to reduce the amount of water you use and can provide you with water-saving devices. Call our free Water Conservation Helpline on 0800 169 9965 for more information.

Remember to use WaterSafe approved plumbers. More information can be found on the website www.watersafe.org.uk.

How do you protect my personal details?

All the information we hold about you is treated in strict confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Access to information by employees will be on a 'need to know' basis. We will share information we hold on you with third parties and service providers in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018. The Privacy Policy on the South West Water website (southwestwater.co.uk/site-utilities/privacy-and-cookies/) explains what information we hold and process, who we share your info with and our lawful basis for doing so.

Other organisations that can help

StepOne
Beaufort House
51 New North Road
Exeter, Devon EX4 4EP
Telephone: 01392 255 428
Website: www.steponecharity.co.uk

Disability Living Foundation
Unit 1, 34 Chatfield Road
Wandsworth
London SW11 3SE
Telephone: 0300 999 0004
Website: dlf.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss
19-23 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8SL
Telephone: 0808 808 0123
Text Phone: 0808 808 9000
SMS: 07800 000 360
Website: actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Mind
15-19 Broadway, Stratford
London E15 4BQ
Telephone: 020 8519 2122
Website: www.mind.org.uk

Disability Rights UK
Ground floor
CAN Mezzanine
49-51 East Road
London N1 6AH
Telephone: 020 7250 8181
Website: disabilityrightsuk.org

RNIB
105 Judd Street
London WC1H 9NE
Telephone: 0303 123 9999
Website: rnib.org.uk

Age UK
Tavis House
1-6 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9NA
Telephone: 0800 169 8080
Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Contact us

Accounts Helpline: 0344 346 1010
8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat
Closed on Sundays and bank holidays

Services Helpline: 0344 346 2020
8am-6pm Mon-Fri
Emergencies only outside these times

There's lots of information and we can be contacted on our website
www.southwestwater.co.uk

Debt Helpline: 0800 083 0283
Water conservation: 0800 378937
Minicom: 0800 169 9965
You can contact us via NGT Text Relay

Address
South West Water
PO Box 4762
Worthing BN11 9NT

We have Codes of Practice on:

- [*Complaints and Compliments*](#)
- [*Our Customer Promise*](#)
- [*Leakage for Domestic Customers*](#)
- [*Our Water Supply Service*](#)
- [*Our Wastewater Service*](#)
- [*Payment and Debt Recovery*](#)
- [*Priority Services*](#)

These codes of practice can be found on our website www.southwestwater.co.uk