

Complaints and Compliments

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We aim to always provide you with the highest possible service by treating you courteously, fairly, efficiently and making contact with us as simple as possible. However, sometimes problems do occur, and when they do, we want to know so that we can put them right.

In this leaflet we explain what to do if you have any comments or suggestions to make or a compliment or complaint about our service.

Our codes of practice are approved by the industry regulator, Ofwat. A list of other codes for domestic customers can be found on the back of this leaflet. They can be found on our website or you can contact us to get a free copy.

Who should I contact if I have a complaint?

If you have a complaint, we have a simple procedure for you to follow to ensure your complaint is dealt with promptly - please see the diagram on the following page.

If you wish to make a complaint about your bill or account please call our Accounts Helpline. If you wish to make a complaint about your water supply or sewerage service please call our Services Helpline; or you can write or contact us via our website.

We recognise that complaining in writing may not be possible for all of our customers so, if this is the case, we will make arrangements either to telephone or to visit you to take details. If you require our assistance with registering a complaint, please call our Accounts Helpline.

How do you register and monitor complaints?

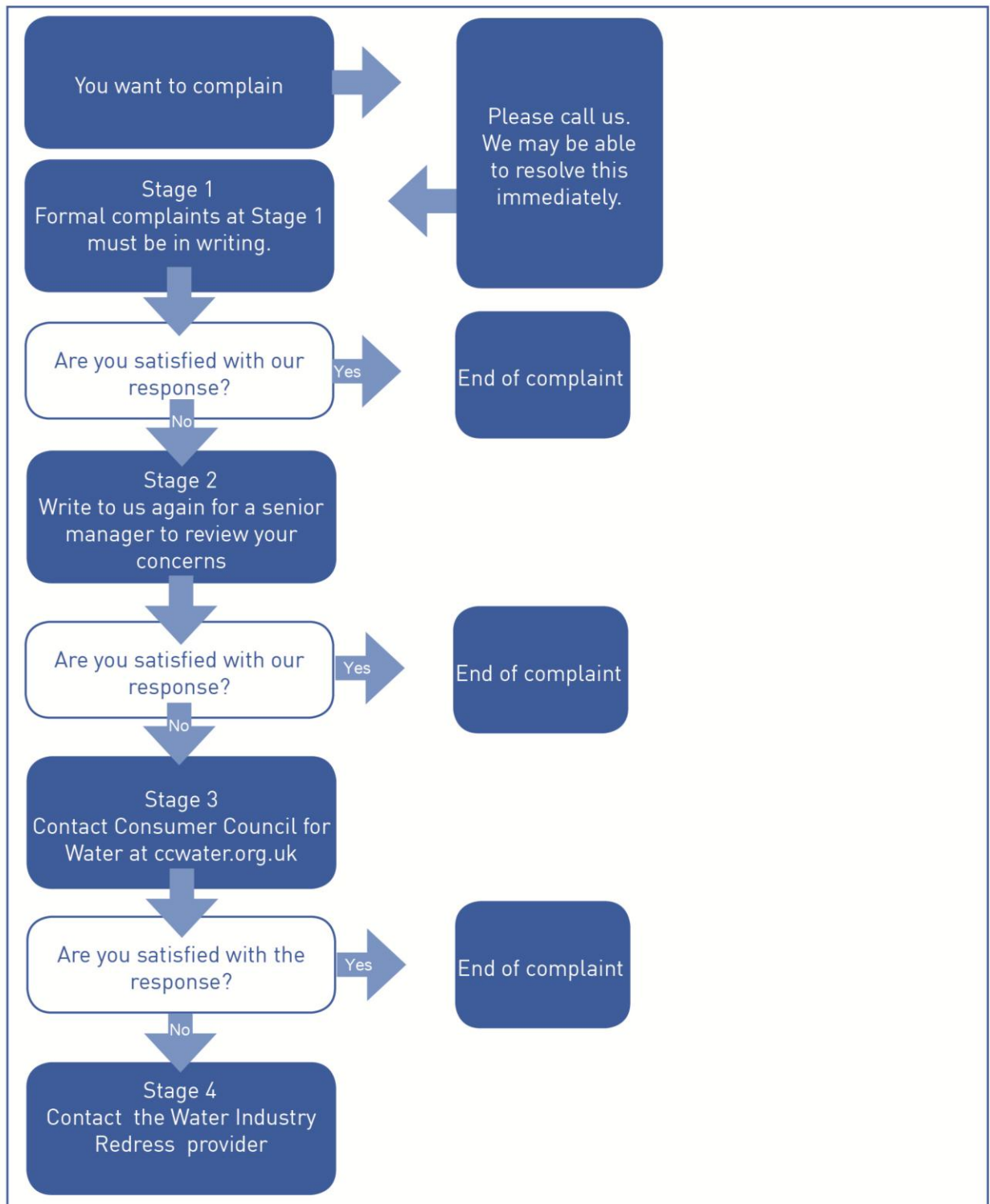
All written complaints will be registered upon receipt.

Telephone complaints and complaints made in person will normally be recorded on our customer contact system as they are received. However, in an emergency situation it may be necessary to register the complaint at a later stage.

Anonymous complaints will not be recorded by us for reporting purposes, but will be considered carefully and action taken where it is warranted.

To help us improve our services, complaints and our performance in handling them are monitored closely by senior managers and we report on our performance annually. We regularly audit the way in which complaints are handled and an independent audit is also undertaken by the Consumer Council for Water.

Complaints process



What is the South West Water complaints procedure?

If you have a complaint about your bill or our water and sewerage services, our specially trained customer service staff will deal with it in the first instance. Staff who deal with complaints have regular training in complaint-handling and our procedures and policies for dealing with complaints.

If you are not happy with our first response, and where you are not providing additional or new information to support the resolution of your complaint, you can write to us and we will ensure a senior manager considers your concerns and our responses.

How will you investigate and respond to my complaint?

If you contact us by telephone or in person, we will try and resolve your complaint immediately.

We will ensure that our responses are clear, concise, free from jargon and include an explanation of all the concerns raised by you. In the case of complex complaints requiring discussions and negotiations with other parties we will keep you informed of developments at agreed intervals.

If you contact us to complain in writing either by letter, email or fax, we guarantee to issue a reply within 10 working days of receipt of your complaint. If we fail to do this, we will give you an automatic payment under Our Customer Promise. If you request one, we will send you an acknowledgement that we have received your written complaint on the day it was received.

In the case of complex complaints requiring discussions and negotiations with other parties we will keep you informed of developments at agreed intervals.

If the complaint is about your bill or account we will withhold any recovery action whilst we investigate your complaint.

How will you put things right?

- We will make contact with you where necessary to discuss your concerns.
- We will investigate your complaint and where it is in our power to do so, put right the cause of the complaint as quickly as possible.
- We will say sorry if we have made a mistake.
- We will tell you what action has been taken to overcome the problem or what action will be taken and timescales.

- Where it is not possible to remedy the problem immediately we will take action to reduce the effect the problem has and keep you informed of action to eliminate the problem in the longer term.
- Where we are unable to meet your requirements or expectations we will explain why.
- We will point you in the right direction if we are not responsible for the cause of the complaint and provide a name and telephone number for further enquiries where appropriate.

Will I be compensated?

If we fail to provide you with a service which we guarantee in Our Customer Promise a payment will be made. If a complaint involves a matter which is not covered by Our Customer Promise, a goodwill payment will be considered taking into account the cause of the problem and loss suffered. In some cases, especially if loss or damage is claimed, we may ask you to provide us with full details, together with receipts for any expense incurred.

Can my complaint be independently reviewed?

In the unlikely event that we are not able to resolve a complaint to your full satisfaction and you remain unhappy with the decision made by the senior manager, you can refer your concerns to the Consumer Council for Water Western Region (CCWater) which will investigate independently. CCWater is an independent statutory body which protects customer interests and investigates customer complaints. It can be contacted at:

Telephone: 0300 034 2222

Hard-of-hearing customers please dial 18001 before the phone number

In writing: 1st floor

Victoria Square House,

Victoria Square,

Birmingham, B24 AJ

Email: via form on website ccwater.org.uk

Water Industry Redress Scheme (WATRS)

If your complaint remains unresolved after it has gone through all the stages of our complaints procedure and has been reviewed by CCWater, you may be eligible to take your concerns to WATRS, the Water Industry Redress Scheme, which can provide an independent binding decision. Details on how and when to apply can be found at watrs.org or contact:

Telephone: 020 7520 3801
 Email: info@watrs.org
 Address: WATRS
 International Dispute Resolution Centre
 70 Fleet Street
 London
 EC4Y 1EU

What complaints can be referred to Ofwat?

Ofwat protects the interests of customers of all water and sewerage companies in accordance with legislative provisions and Government licences. Disputes that can be referred to Ofwat include any claim that we are not complying with our licence conditions or statutory obligations.

They are:

- Disputes about water connections and lateral drains
- Disputes about interest on monies deposited for requisitioned mains, sewers, lateral drain, water connections
- Self-lay water main disputes
- Guaranteed standards scheme disputes
- Requirement for separate supplies
- Reasonableness of refusal for a free meter option
- Closure or restriction of use of a public sewer
- Alterations to the drainage system in the area
- Requirement that drains or sewers be constructed as part of a general system
- Disputes regarding costs and security where we decide to undertake the making of a connection to the public sewer
- Adoption of sewers.
- Disputes where we have refused an application to adopt a sewer at some future point
- Conditions for connecting a drain to a public sewer
- Work by us on private land.

For disagreements regarding: compensation for street works and sewerage works (Schedule 12 Water Industry Act, 1991); and conditions of installing, costs and positioning of a meter (Water Industry Act sections 47, 49, 148 and The Water (Meters) Regulations), Ofwat can appoint an independent arbitrator where the parties cannot agree on one. They can be contacted at:

Telephone: 0121 644 7500

In writing: Centre City Tower,
7 Hill Street,
Birmingham B5 4UA
Email: mailbox@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk
Fax: 0121 644 7559

How do you protect my personal details?

All the information we hold about you is treated in strict confidence. Access to information by employees will be on a 'need to know' basis only. Where information is held, it will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Positive feedback

Although complaints are really helpful and make us aware of how we can improve, it is also very helpful to hear when you have experienced an excellent service from us. If you would like to tell us when we have exceeded your expectations please call our Accounts Helpline or write or email us telling us what it was that you liked, for example the people that you spoke to or met, speed and quality of our service or how you were treated as a customer.

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
southwestwater.co.uk

Email: customercontact@southwestwater.co.uk

Debt helpline: 0800 083 0283
Water conservation: 0800 378937
Minicom: 0800 169 9965
For hard-of-hearing customers please dial 18001 before the helpline numbers.

Address
South West Water, PO Box 4762,
Worthing, BN11 9NT

*03 numbers are charged at standard rates and will be included in any free minutes in a mobile or landline phone contract.

We have codes of practice on:

- Payment and Debt Recovery
- Priority Services
- Charges, Bills and Water Meters
- Complaints and Compliments
- Our Customer Promise
- Leakage for Domestic Customers
- Our Water Supply Service
- Our Waste Water Service
- Payment and Debt Recovery
- Priority Services.

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