

Contact us by phone

Contacting us by telephone is normally the quickest way to resolve any problems.

Please call us on the following number so we can help.

- Water charges/bills: 0345 075 0711
- Water or wastewater services: 0345 075 0713

Opening hours are 8am to 8pm Mon-Fri and 8am to 4pm Saturday.

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

How we will deal with your complaint when you phone us

If we've done something wrong we'll always say sorry and will aim to put things right as quickly as possible. We will listen to your issue and aim to resolve it there and then over the telephone.

If we can't, we will take it away for further investigation and respond to you within 10 working days at the latest (we're currently resolving 80% of complaints within 5 working days).

Contact us in writing

We would always recommend calling us if you have a complaint as we can normally sort out any issues then and there over the telephone. The number to call is:

- Water charges/billing: 0345 075 0711
- Water or wastewater services: 0345 075 0713

However, if you would prefer to write to us please use one of the following options:

- email us via our website unitedutilities.com/contactus
- write to us at United Utilities, PO Box 453, Warrington, WA55 1SE

Please remember to include your phone number so we can call you back and resolve your complaint over the telephone. When writing to us also include your name, address, account number (you can find this on a recent water bill) and your email address (if you have one). When we receive your written complaint we will try to contact you by telephone to fully understand your issue. We will do all we can to resolve your complaint there and then over the telephone. However, if we are unable to contact you by telephone we will send you a written reply within 10 working days at the latest (we're currently resolving 80% of complaints within 5 working days).

How we will deal with your complaint

- Stage 1 contact: When we reply to you we will give you the name of the person owning your complaint together with a telephone number should you wish to contact them to discuss any aspect of our reply. We want to do all we can to put things right as quickly as possible.
- Stage 2 contact: If you're not happy with our response, please give us a call so we can discuss the matter further. We will also escalate your complaint to an agent who has not been involved in your initial complaint who will carry out an independent review.
- Stage 3 Consumer Council for Water (CCW): If you feel that your complaint is not resolved following Stage 1 and 2, you may then refer your complaint to the Consumer Council for Water, the independent body that represents customer interests and investigates complaints. Also if your complaint is not resolved within 8 weeks you can ask CCW to investigate your complaint for you. Write to: The Consumer Council for Water, First Floor, Victoria Square House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B2 4AJ Call: 0300 034 2222 Fax: 0121 345 1010 Website: ccwater.org.uk
- Stage 4 Water Redress Scheme (WATRS): If you remain dissatisfied following Stage 3, you may then be eligible to take your concerns to the Water Redress Scheme who will provide an independent binding decision. You will need notification from CCW before your complaint is eligible to be dealt with by WATRS. Call: 0207 520 3801 Website: watrs.org

We'll investigate your complaint and do all we can to resolve it fully.

If we have made a mistake, we will say sorry and explain the cause of the mistake. Our aim is to put things right as soon as we can. If you have suffered specific loss or damage, due to our mistake, we will need full details and may ask for any receipts. We will also make checks to see if you are entitled to a payment under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

Dealing with people acting on your behalf

We will accept complaints from your representative as long as you have confirmed that you have given permission for them to act on your behalf.

Setting the standard

Under our Guaranteed Standards of Service, if we fail to reply to your written complaint within 10 working days of receiving it, you may be entitled to compensation. We are currently resolving 80% of complaints within 5 working days. You can find out more about our Guaranteed Standards of Service by downloading 'Our Standards of Service' leaflet at unitedutilities.com/leaflets

Arbitration

This means bringing someone else in to try to settle a dispute. In some cases, you will have the legal right to refer your dispute to arbitration. If we cannot agree on an arbitrator, OFWAT, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs or the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (depending on the dispute) will choose one. Matters that may be suitable for arbitration include:

- Disputes about compensation following our work in the street
- Positioning of water meters
- Disputes about the installation of water fittings (prevention of contamination)

Legal action

There may be cases where you consider taking legal action against us. You may wish to consider consulting a solicitor, as they will be able to advise you on the most appropriate steps to take.

Confidentiality

We collect and process personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act and in order to manage our operations effectively. We may disclose personal data, including sensitive personal data, to third parties, such as our employees, contractors and regulators in order to help provide our service to you. We may also disclose personal data where there is legitimate need or a legal obligation to do so. If you would like someone to act on your behalf please notify us of this. Please visit unitedutilities.com/privacy for full details about our data protection and privacy policy. We will only give information to you over the telephone if you can prove your identity by passing security questions. This applies to you or to the person you have appointed to act on your behalf. If you make a complaint about one of our employees, a manager will look into it. If the complaint is about alleged financial irregularity, our group audit manager will investigate. We will pass complaints about alleged criminal activity to our group security manager and then, if appropriate, the police.

Standards of service

We keep a constant watch on the speed and quality of our replies. In addition to our own internal audits, the Consumer Council for Water may carry out riskbased assessments based on our complaint responses. They provide us with feedback on our performance and report on this at their public meetings.

Ofwat The Regulator

There are some specific types of complaint which are dealt with by Ofwat, as the industry regulator, rather than by the Consumer Council for Water. These complaints include:

- those about water and sewerage companies' powers to lay pipes on private land;
 - concerns that the water companies are allegedly breaking their licence conditions or their main water supply or sewerage duties; and
 - those about anti-competitive behaviour under the Competition Act 1998, for example colluding on pricing or bidding for contracts.
- Write to: Ofwat Centre City Tower 7 Hill Street Birmingham B5 4UA. Call: 0121 644 7500 Website: ofwat.gov.uk Email: mailbox@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk