



This leaflet explains our Customer Charter for Domestic and Commercial Customers. The scheme goes beyond the basic legal requirements and is part of our Code of Practice series of leaflets.

Northumbrian Water have their own leaflet for sewerage services provided in the Hartlepool area - "Our promise to you" which you can get by phoning Northumbrian Water Customer Services on 0845 717 1100, or by writing to the address given in the section 'How to claim' or by visiting their website at www.nwl.co.uk.

Our scheme is our way of guaranteeing that we will provide a good standard of service. If we fail to provide the guaranteed level of service we will pay compensation.

This leaflet explains how our scheme will work but it is not a legal document. Your basic legal rights are laid out in the Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008 often referred to as the Guaranteed Standards of Service (GSS).

To offer the best service levels, we also have some of our own customer service standards which offer additional guaranteed protection to you.

Throughout this leaflet you will see references to "working days". Working days are any days, which are not public holidays or Saturdays or Sundays.

Our Guaranteed Standards of Service are:

1 KEEPING APPOINTMENTS

We offer appointments Monday – Friday 9am to 4pm (excluding Bank Holidays)

If we arrange an appointment (either in writing or verbally) to visit you we must tell you whether the visit will be before or after 1.00 p.m., or, if you request it, a 2 hour period during which the visit will be made. If we do not do this we will pay you £20 compensation.

If we fail to keep the appointment we will pay you £20.

2 QUESTIONS ABOUT BILLS

If you write to us with a question or comment about the accuracy or completeness of your bill, we will reply within 10 working days. We will pay £20 compensation if we fail to do this.

3 ASKING TO CHANGE HOW YOU PAY

If you write to us and ask to change how you pay (for example, you apply to pay by installments) and we cannot meet your

CUSTOMER CHARTER

incorporating GUARANTEED STANDARDS SCHEME

request, we will tell you so within 5 working days.

We will pay £20 compensation if we fail to do this.

4 COMPLAINTS ABOUT WATER SERVICES

You will receive a reply to written complaints about your water service within 10 working days. We will pay you £20 compensation if you do not receive a reply within 10 working days.

5 NOTICE THAT WE WILL INTERRUPT YOUR WATER SUPPLY

Planned Interruptions

We will tell you in writing if we intend to reduce or cut off your water supply for 4 hours or less. We will also tell you when we will put your supply back to normal. We will pay you £20 compensation in the case of domestic premises, or £50 in other cases if we don't turn your supply back on by the time we said we would, and an extra £10 in the case of domestic premises, or £25 in other cases for each day that you are left without any supply.

If your supply will be interrupted for more than 4 hours we will give you at least 48 hours written notice. If we fail to give you 48 hours written notice, we will pay you £20 compensation in the case of domestic premises or £50 in other cases. We will also tell you when we will put your supply back to normal. We will pay you £20 compensation in the case of domestic premises, or £50 in other cases if we don't turn the supply back on by the time we said we would, and an extra £10 in the case of domestic premises, or £25 in other cases for each extra day that you are left without any water supply.

Emergency Interruptions

In an emergency we normally cannot warn you that your supply will be interrupted. However, we will do our best to tell you the reason for the interruption and where you can get water from. We will also tell you when we hope to put your supply back on and who you can contact for more information. If the emergency is caused by a leak or burst and we are able to warn you in writing, under our enhanced customer charter, we will pay you £20 compensation in the case of domestic premises, or £50 in other cases if we don't turn the supply back on by the time we said we would. We will pay an extra £10 in the case of domestic premises, £25 in other cases for each extra day that you are left without any water supply. In other emergencies where the interruption is not caused by a leak or burst for example, a pump failure, we will put the supply back on within 12 hours of us finding out about the interruption. If we fail to do this, we will pay you £20 compensation in the case of domestic premises or £50 in other cases.

We will restore supplies within 48 hours in the case of a burst on a strategic main. If we fail to do this, we will pay you £20 compensation in the case of domestic premises or £50 in other cases.

Repeated Emergency Interruptions

If your water supply is interrupted without notice on three or more occasions totaling more than 15 hours in any 12 month period we will give you £20 compensation in the case of domestic premises, or £25 in other cases.

6 WATER PRESSURE

If your water pressure falls substantially below normal, please tell us. Once we have verified this is not due to an operational fault we will make an appointment to visit you within 3 working days. If we fail to do this we will pay you £20 compensation.

We will maintain a minimum of 7 metres pressure in the communication pipe supplying your property. If the pressure falls below this minimum for an hour or more on two occasions in any period of 28 days, we will pay you £25 compensation.

We do not have to maintain the minimum pressure when we are carrying out necessary work, or during droughts. So we will not pay compensation in these circumstances.

If you report a pressure problem to us and the problem is in the service pipe, we will investigate and deal with the problems on the pipes we are responsible for within 15 working days. We will pay you £20 if we fail to do this unless you cannot give us access to your property when we need it.

7 WATER QUALITY

If you tell us about a problem with the quality of your water, and we take a water sample to

analyse, we will telephone you with the results as soon as they are available and we will give you a written report within 15 working days. If we don't meet this deadline, we will pay you £20 compensation.

8 METER READING

We guarantee to read your meter at least once each financial year (our financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March) and to send an invoice to you within 7 working days of reading the meter or estimating the meter reading. We will pay you £20 compensation if we fail to do this unless you, your employees or your agents prevent us from reading the meter.

9 INCORRECT COUNTY COURT CLAIM

If we issue a county court summons in error, we will withdraw the claim and write to you with confirmation. This letter will inform you that your account has been credited (£50 for county court claim in error, £100 for a judgement in error).

10 REPLACEMENT OF LEAD PIPES

If you intend to replace your lead supply pipe, we will replace our section (the communication pipe) at the same time providing you give us 15 working days notice. If we fail to do this we will pay you £20 compensation unless:

- You do not make a written claim for compensation within 3 months of us failing to meet the guaranteed standards
- The delay is due to obtaining 3rd party permission for a highway excavation.

11 PAYING COMPENSATION

Compensation to which you are automatically entitled for supply interruptions will be paid or credited to your account within 20 working days. If we fail to make this automatic payment we will make a further payment to you automatically unless it was impractical for us to identify you as an affected customer. In this case, you can claim your payment within 3 months. Compensation will be paid within 10 working days for all other failure of standards (except low pressure).

12 EXCEPTIONS

There are a number of exceptions when compensation will not be made:

Pressure

- You have already received a payment for poor service for pressure in the same financial year (April-March).
- It was impractical for us to identify you as being affected and you have not made a written claim within 3 months of the second pressure reduction.
- We suffered industrial action or actions of a 3rd party making it impractical to maintain the pressure

Keeping Appointments

- You cancelled the appointment.
- We cancelled the appointment giving at least 24 hours notice
- Severe weather, industrial action or a 3rd party prevented us from visiting you

Account Queries, Requests about Payment Arrangements and Complaints

- You have told us that you do not wish to continue with the query, complaint or request about payment arrangements
- In the case of complaints and queries, severe weather prevented us from visiting you where a visit was necessary to help us to reply.
- Industrial action or actions of a 3rd party made it impossible to dispatch a reply to you
- The query, complaint or request about payment arrangements were not sent to the right address for us to deal with it
- We think that your query or complaint is frivolous or vexatious

Supply Interruptions

- Severe weather, industrial action or actions of a 3rd party prevented us from restoring your water supply
- Where the leak or burst on a strategic main was so exceptional that it was unreasonable to expect your supply to be restored in the time period
- It was impractical for us to identify you as being affected and you have not made a written claim within 3 months of the interruption
- Your water supply is interrupted or cut off because of drought for which there is a separate compensation scheme

- Industrial action or actions of a third party prevented us from giving you correct notice at least 48 hours before the supply was cut off.

Customer Arrears

- You will receive a credit to your account rather than a payment if you have a debt that is more than 6 weeks old.

Where to send your complaints and questions

If you have a question about your bill or you want to change how to pay, please write to:

Hartlepool Water

3 Lancaster Road

Hartlepool TS24 8LW or email is at enquiries@hartlepoolwater.co.uk

If you do not write to the correct address you will not be entitled to compensation.

How to claim

In cases where you must write to us to claim compensation or where you wish to complain about your sewerage services, write to the address below which deals with your particular claim:

- **Claims about your water supply and us not replying to either questions about our bills or written complaints.**

Hartlepool Water

3 Lancaster Road

Hartlepool TS24 8LW

Email: enquiries@hartlepoolwater.co.uk

- **Claims or complaints about foul or surface water drainage (including blockages or flooding), sewage treatment and disposal and other claims.**

Northumbrian Water

PO Box 300

Durham DH1 9WG

Tel: 0845 717 1100 (24 hours)

Or email through www.nwl.co.uk

What we do with your claim

When we get your claim we will look back at our records to check the dates your claim is for. We will tell you the results of our investigation and if your claim is justified we will send you a cheque.

If you are not satisfied with the way we have dealt with your claim, you should make a complaint to us. For details of how to complain, please ask us for a copy of our

'Complaints Procedure' leaflet. You can do this by either ringing us on 01429 858050 or by emailing enquiries@hartlepoolwater.co.uk

Disputes

If we do not think your claim is justified you can appeal to the Water Regulation Services Authority (Ofwat) who will then decide. This decision is binding on both parties. The address is:

Office of Water Services
Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham B5 4UA

Tel: 0121 644 7500
Fax: 0121 644 7699
Or email enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk

The leaflets in this series are:

- Code of Practice for Domestic and Commercial Customers – Introductory Leaflet
- Your water supply for Domestic and Commercial Customers
- Understanding charges for Domestic and Commercial Customers
- How to pay your bill (including a Code of Practice on Debt Recovery)
- Living with a Meter (including a Code of Practice on Leakage)
- How to contact us (what to do if you wish to complain)
- Pipelaying in Private Land
- Water watchdogs
- Customer Charter

In addition, we have a leaflet which gives details of our current charges. You can get a copy of any of our leaflets, free of charge, by ringing us on 01429 858050 Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5pm (excluding Bank Holidays). Or you can write to us or call in at our office:

3 Lancaster Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8LW
Or email – enquiries@hartlepoolwater.co.uk
Or visit our website www.hartlepoolwater.co.uk where you can download these leaflets.