

How we handle customer complaints – code of practice



Complaints and Compliments

We aim to provide you with the best possible service by treating you courteously, fairly, efficiently and making contact with us as easy 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.

A list of other codes can be found at the back of this leaflet. You can download them from our website, www.bournemouthwater.co.uk/publications, or call us for a free copy.

Bournemouth Water supplies your drinking water, so if you have a question regarding drainage or sewerage you'll need to contact your sewerage provider.

- *Wessex Water 0345 600 3600*
- *Southern Water 0330 303 0368*

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 next page.

If your complaint is about your bill, account or your water supply please call our Customer Service on 01202 590059. We're open 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday; and 9am to 2pm on Saturdays (we're closed on bank holidays); or you can visit our offices between 8.30am and 5.15pm, Monday to Friday.

You can also write to us or contact us via our website. Our contact details are on the back page of this leaflet. We aim to deal with non-written complaints and queries when you raise them.

If you're not able to complain in writing, we'll make arrangements either to call you or to visit you to take the details. If you need our help to register a complaint, please call our Customer Service.

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 registered 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 registered by us for reporting purposes, but will be considered carefully and action taken where necessary.

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's also undertaken by the Consumer Council for Water.

Complaints process



What is the Bournemouth Water complaints procedure?

If you have a complaint about your bill or our water 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.

If you're not happy with our initial response, and you're not providing additional or new information we need to consider in resolving your complaint, you can write to us and we'll ensure a senior manager reviews your concerns and our response.

How will you investigate and respond to my complaint?

If you contact us by telephone or in person, we'll try to resolve your complaint immediately.

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

If you contact us to complain in writing, by letter, email or fax, we'll reply within 10 working days of receiving your complaint. If we don't, we'll make an automatic payment to you under our [Customer charter – code of practice for household customers](#). If you ask us to acknowledge that we've received your complaint, we'll do this on the day we receive it.

If your complaint is about your bill or account, we won't take any recovery action while 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 when.
- Where it's not possible to remedy the problem immediately we'll take action to reduce the effect the problem has and keep you informed of action to eliminate the problem in the longer term.
- If we're unable to meet your requirements or expectations, we'll explain why.
- If we're not responsible for the cause of the complaint, we'll point you in the right direction 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 Charter we'll make a payment. If a complaint involves a matter not covered by our Customer Charter, we'll consider a goodwill payment 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're 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 (CCWater) which will investigate independently. CCWater is an independent statutory body which protects customers' interests and investigates complaints.

They can be contacted at:

Telephone: 0300 034 2222

NGT Text Relay is also available

Address: 1st floor Victoria Square House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B2 4AJ

ccwater.org.uk

Email: via form on website ccwater.org.uk

Water Industry Redress Scheme (WATRS)

If your complaint remains unresolved after it's been 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 watsr.org or contact:

Telephone: 020 7520 3801 Email: info@watsr.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're 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 and water connections
- Self-lay water main disputes
- Guaranteed standards scheme disputes
- Requirement for separate supplies
- Reasonableness of refusal for a free meter option
- Work by us on private land.

For disagreements regarding: compensation for street 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

Address: Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street,
Birmingham B5 4UA

Email: casemanagementoffice@ofwat.gsi.gov.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 1998. Access to information by employees will be on a 'need to know' basis only.

We'll share the information we hold about you with our service providers and agents for the purposes of providing water services and billing. We may also share it with:

- An independent company for customer survey purposes
- A third party insurance provider, who may contact you about products and services that you may find useful

If you don't want to be contacted in relation to a customer survey, or by a third party insurance provider, please call our Customer Service team.

Compliments

Although complaints are really helpful and make us aware of how we can improve, it's also very helpful to hear when you've experienced an excellent service from us. If you'd like to tell us when we've exceeded your expectations, please call our Customer Service 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.

Other codes of practice and information leaflets

The following documents may be helpful. You can download them from our website www.bournemouthwater.co.uk/publications or call us for a free copy.

- [*Customer charter \(Guaranteed Standards Scheme\)*](#)
- [*Code of practice on leakage for household customers*](#)
- [*Code of practice for recovering domestic water debt*](#)
- [*Your option to meter*](#)
- [*Household water charges*](#)

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Fax 01202 597022
customerservice@bournemouthwater.co.uk
Automated card payment service 0800 389 5110
Freephone Leakline 0800 587 8979
www.bournemouthwater.co.uk