

## Water bills to increase by average of just under seven per cent

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Roger Harrington, Managing Director

Water bills are to rise by an average of 6.81 per cent from April.

Sembcorp Bournemouth Water (SBW), which provides water to about 500,000 people across Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire, has received approval for the increases from Ofwat, the water regulator which governs the price companies can charge.

The rise, while slightly higher than the national average increase in water bills across England and Wales, means the average household charge for 2011/12 in the SBW area will be approximately 40p a day.

The actual rise for individual households will depend, in the case of metered customers, on the amount of water used or, in the case of customers who do not have a meter, on the rateable value of the property. Some SBW customers will, therefore, see smaller increases while others a larger increase.

Roger Harrington, Managing Director, said: "Our ongoing investment in areas which our customers say matter to them means that, regrettably, charges will rise.

"Ofwat set price limits in 2009 for the period up to 2015 so that we can finance the investment needed to maintain the water network and make some improvements to the reliability of the service.

"The regulator also set challenging efficiency targets so that bills will not be any higher than they need to be.

"We realise that any increases at present will not be welcomed but, to put our prices into context, the average household charge for 2011/12 will still amount to approximately 40p per day.

"We believe that this represents good value for money and our intention is that our charges will continue to remain that way."

Mr Harrington pointed out that SBW continued to be one of the water industry's leading performers.

He said: "Customer service performance, water supply service and efficiency are all among the best in our sector.

"All this benefits our customers, with the annual average bill currently 15 per cent, or £27, below the industry average."

The new charges take effect from April 1. SBW offers a number of payment options and full details can be found on the company's website at [www.sembcorpbw.co.uk](http://www.sembcorpbw.co.uk). There are many things that the company can do to help, so if any customers are having difficulty in paying their bills, then they should get in touch with the company rather than let problems build up.