



**You could
be better off
with a meter**

Water meter application pack 2016/2017

Are you paying too much

No one wants to pay more than they need to for the basics in life.

With a water meter, fixed bills become a thing of the past. Your charges are based on the water you use, so the more water you save, the more cash you save.



for your water services?

Once you've applied for a meter, we'll be round to fit it within eight weeks – sooner if we can.

We'll decide the best place to put it. Our preference is always to fit the meter inside your home – these days we use remote technology and we don't normally have to enter your house and disturb you to read the meter. And the good thing about having the meter indoors is that it's easier for you to take your own readings so you can monitor your water usage.

Sometimes, we may need to do a bit of minor joinery to fit your meter snugly in its new home. Don't worry, we'll always check with you first before doing any work of this nature.

If, for whatever reason, we can't fit the meter inside your home, we'll see if it's possible to fit it in the footpath. It's worth pointing out that if we can fit the meter indoors, but you're desperate to have it outside your home, we'll have to charge for this work (the

charge for 2016/2017 is £164 plus VAT). In all other instances we fit our meters for free.

Meter defeater

Occasionally, it's not possible to fit a water meter at all. For example, if you share your water supply with other properties, you have more than one supply of water to your property or your pipework is not suitable, our expert fitters are likely to scratch their heads and deliver an apologetic 'no'.

If that happens to you, all is not lost. We will review your account to see if paying your bill based on an assessed charge is a better option (an assessed charge is a fixed annual charge based on your property type or whether you live alone). If this is the case we will arrange for your tariff to be updated and let you know via a letter and a revised bill.

Take our online 'splash the cash' challenge!

Go to our website and try our instant online calculator. It will estimate your potential annual savings with a water meter. It only takes a few minutes to complete, and you could be surprised by how much you might save.

unitedutilities.com/meters



Family fortunes

If you have a small family, live alone or are a couple, a water meter could well prove a winner.

Even if you have a large family, it's worth checking if you might benefit from a meter - especially if your current fixed bill is high due to your home having a high rateable value.

Take a look at these households. Which one is closest to home?

Katie

31 year-old Katie recently moved into her first home. She lives alone, although her terrace is by far the liveliest on the street, thanks to her party loving mates. She takes showers, not baths (no time!) and doesn't have a garden – unless you count a window box with wilting herbs! Her fixed water bill for this year is £440.

Likely to save with a water meter?

YES

Possible savings of around:
£148 per year

Kathryn & Brian

Retired couple Kathryn and Brian have been living in their leafy bungalow for 11 years. Their children have long since flown the nest, but their three grandchildren, love of travel and immaculately tended garden keep them more than busy. They use a water butt to keep their flowers blooming, as they are green-minded, as well as green-fingered. Their fixed water bill for this year is £720.

Likely to save with a water meter?

YES

Possible savings of around:
£311 per year

The Wangs

Steve and Li Wang couldn't be prouder of their baby girl. With nappies, night feeds and CBeebies currently dominating their lives, they've precious little time to think about their utility bills, or saving water for that matter. That's sure to change in time, especially as the overheads on their semi are high. Their fixed water bill for this year is £610.

Likely to save with a water meter:

SMALL SAVINGS POSSIBLE

Possible savings of around:
£85 per year

The Hendersons

The Hendersons are an all-action family of four (five if you include Jojo the dog). When they're not all mountain-biking together in the Lake District, mum and dad are ferrying son Max and daughter Alice to football practice and street dance class. Needless to say, the washing machine and dishwasher never stop at their house. Their fixed water bill for this year is £660.

Likely to save with a water meter:

UNLIKELY

Sorry!

Your bill

We normally read water meters once every six months and bill our customers on those readings. You can expect your first new bill to drop through the letterbox anytime within six months of your meter being fitted.

Your bill will show the meter reading that has been used to calculate your charges. If for any reason we've been unable to read your meter, we will leave a card explaining what to do. You can call us with your reading on **0800 980 6050**, or you can enter your reading on our website. An actual reading taken either by you or one of our meter readers will make sure you receive a more accurate bill.

If we owe you any money from your old account, we'll knock it off your first metered bill. And if you owe us anything, we'll send you a bill to settle up. All this will happen automatically.

You can continue to pay in the way that suits you best, including Direct Debit, standing order, at your bank, or by post. And if you sign up for our My Account service, this is even easier (visit [unitedutilities.com/myaccount](https://www.unitedutilities.com/myaccount) for full details).

Switching back

The vast majority of our customers never look back once they get a water meter. Over half a million of our customers have had a free meter installed since April 2000.

However, if you find that you are not making the savings you expected, you can switch back to your old fixed bill method, so long as you tell us within 24 months of having your meter fitted.

In these circumstances we won't remove the meter, although all future bills will be based on the rateable value of your property. If you ever move home, the new occupants will be charged for their water services based on meter readings.



A bit of a smarty pants

Your meter may not be able to make the tea or series link your favourite TV programme, but it can send readings to us automatically without us having to disturb you to get an accurate meter reading (although we may need access to the meter to maintain or replace it at any time in the future).

All the meters we fit allow us to take readings remotely. And don't forget, you can also take your own meter readings to monitor your water usage.



Wait a mo... did you know?

A lot of the water we use in the home is heated by gas or electricity (such as baths, showers and washing up). So any water savings you make should reduce your energy bills too. Who says water and electricity don't mix?

Simple changes to your daily routine can really help to drive down your bill with a meter. Visit unitedutilities.com/watertight for lots of hints and tips. You can also order free stuff from us at our website to help you get started!

Try it for up to two years... change back if you don't like it

If you don't make savings from your water meter, you can switch back to your old fixed bill within 24 months though you will have to pay any charges owed off your metered bill.

We install water meters free of charge, and applying for one couldn't be easier.

You can:



Click: apply online at unitedutilities.com/meters



Call: ring us on **0345 072 6065** and we'll do the rest



Post: fill out the application form included with this leaflet



Other leaflets that may be of interest:

This leaflet is one in a series of publications containing useful information for our customers. Others that may be of interest to you are:

- **A simple guide to pipes, drains and sewers**
- **Testing your household water meter**
- **A guide to paying your water bill**
- **A guide to our Priority Services**
- **A guide to using water wisely**
- **WaterSure application pack**
- **Our complaints procedure**
- **Replacing lead and common supply pipes**
- **Our standards of service**

You can download any of our leaflets from our website: unitedutilities.com/leaflets, or write to: **United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington WA55 1WB**. Alternatively, our most frequently requested leaflets are available through our 24-hour automated leaflet request line on **0800 980 6050**.

All our booklets are available in large print or Braille. Please call us on **0345 672 2888** to order a leaflet in these formats.

In case you need to contact us:



To talk to us about your bill:

0345 672 2888 if you don't have a water meter

0345 672 2999 if you have a water meter

Opening hours: 8am - 8pm Mon to Fri; 8am - 4pm Sat

To talk to us about your water and wastewater services:

0345 672 3723

Opening hours: for emergencies we are open 24 hours.

You can also call this number to check the identity of one of our representatives.

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



You can write to us at:

United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington WA55 1WB



Or go online:

unitedutilities.com



My Account

You can now manage your water account online.

Register now at: **unitedutilities.com/myaccount**



United Utilities Water Limited,
Haweswater House, Lingley Mere Business Park, Lingley Green Avenue, Warrington WA5 3LP.
Registered in England and Wales. Registered Number 2366678.

Water meters

Your questions answered

Fitting the water meter

How do I apply to have a water meter fitted?

Apply online at unitedutilities.com/meters or complete the enclosed application form. You can also apply by calling us on **0345 072 6065**.

Where will the water meter be fitted?

We normally fit the water meter inside your home free of charge (on the water supply pipe, which is the pipe which brings water into your home). If we cannot fit the meter inside your home, we will fit it outside instead (in some instances a purpose made meter box may already exist outside your home - if this is the case we would fit the meter in this box).

We will visit your home to carry out a survey to decide on the best place to fit the meter. We will try our best to fit your meter during this visit, but we may have to come back again if this isn't possible.

As the meter needs to be attached to your water supply pipe (which is often found under the kitchen sink), we may ask you to move certain items so that we can do this (such as any white goods that might be blocking the water supply pipe, wood panelling etc).

We can do minor joinery work when we fit your meter, and will always make sure you are happy about this before we start any work.

Can I pay to have the water meter fitted elsewhere?

Yes. If it's possible for us to install the water meter in our preferred location (inside your home), but you would like the water meter to be outside, we will check to see if this is possible. Unfortunately, some properties cannot be metered externally, see next section for full details. If we are able to install the water meter in the footpath for you, you will need to pay any difference in cost, which is **£164 plus VAT**.

Can you always fit a water meter?

No, not always. Here are the most common reasons for not being able to fit a water meter:

- You live in a flat and have access to communal facilities such as a laundry room or a shared hot water supply.
- You have more than one supply of water to your property - meaning we would need to fit more than one water meter.
- The pipe supplying water to your property also supplies other properties.
- The pipework inside your property is inaccessible, in poor condition, or does not comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.
- We are unable to find a suitable place to fit the water meter in either
 - the footpath or public highway outside your property
 - inside your home.

If we can't fit a water meter at your home we will review your account to see if it's a better option to pay your water and wastewater services based on an assessed charge, which is a fixed amount per year. The amount you pay depends on your property type, unless you live alone, in which case you may be eligible for our Single Person Household Tariff.

If this is the case we will arrange for your tariff to be updated and let you know via a letter and a revised bill.

When will you read the water meter?

We will usually read the water meter for billing purposes every six months. The meters we fit inside homes can be remotely read, which means they send readings to us automatically without us having to enter your home.

However, there may be occasions in the future when we need to enter your home to maintain, inspect or replace the meter.

If we've been unable to read the water meter, we will leave a card explaining what to do next. You can call us with your reading on **0800 980 6050**, or enter your reading online at unitedutilities.com/submit-a-meter-reading. An actual reading, taken either by you, or by our meter reader, will make sure you receive an accurate bill.

For further information



unitedutilities.com/meters



0345 072 6065

Opening hours:
8am - 8pm Mon to Fri;
8am - 4pm Sat



United Utilities
PO Box 246,
Warrington
WA55 1EA

How long will it take to fit the water meter?

If the survey shows that we are able to fit a water meter, we will do so within **eight weeks** of receiving your application form. We'll write to you within two weeks of receiving your form to confirm when we will do the survey.

We'll then contact you by phone or letter to arrange a convenient appointment time.

In the unlikely event that we take longer than eight weeks to fit the water meter, we will normally credit your account with **£5** for every full week after we fail to meet our standard. There are some circumstances when you may not be entitled to this allowance.

These include:

- If you haven't filled in your application form correctly and need to re-send it to us.
- If we make an appointment with you to fit the water meter and you miss or cancel that appointment.
- If you fail to carry out any necessary alterations to your pipework (we will let you know if alterations are required at the time of the survey). If you fail to carry out these alterations within eight weeks, your original request will be cancelled and you will have to re-apply for a water meter.
- If you ask us to delay fitting the water meter beyond the eight weeks.

I'm a tenant, can I apply to have a water meter fitted?

Yes, unless you have a fixed term tenancy agreement of less than six months in which case you must obtain your landlord's permission before applying for a water meter.

I'm a landlord, can I apply to have a water meter fitted at one of my properties?

You can only ask us to fit a water meter if your name is on the water bill. Please make sure you tell your tenants that you want a water meter fitted at the property.

Can I change my mind after the water meter has been fitted?

Yes, unless you are a high water user. For example, if you fill a pond or swimming pool (with a capacity over 10,000 litres) automatically, use a sprinkler, or your property is a house and business and the main water usage is for the business, then you'd have to keep your metered bills.

For everyone else you have up to 24 months, after the water meter has been fitted, to tell us that you want to change back to the way we used to charge you for water services.

We'll not remove the meter but all your future bills will be based on the rateable value of your property, as before. After 24 months, you'll continue to pay charges based on your meter readings and won't have the option of moving back to your old way of charging for water services.

Will fitting a water meter affect the electrical earthing in my property?

If we fit the water meter inside your home, nothing we do will change the continuity of the earthing or bonding of your electrical system. We'll fit a permanent bonding cable around the water meter and this must stay in place.

If we've fitted the water meter outside your home, and your electrical system used the water service pipe as an earth, there may be some effect. You have responsibility for the correct electrical earthing of your property. If you are concerned about this please contact a qualified electrician.

What happens if my water supply pipe leaks?

We have a private leak repair scheme for household customers. This means that, in certain cases, we may repair a leak on your external supply pipe without charge. We'll only repair any leaks on the pipework between the property boundary and the outside wall of your home but not under buildings or on internal plumbing. Full details can be found at [unitedutilities.com/bursthme](https://www.unitedutilities.com/bursthme)

Will I have to pay for water wasted because of leaks?

When you have a water meter, we charge you for all the water that passes through it. We recommend you take regular meter readings to help identify any leaks on your pipework. If you discover a leak you have the right to make a claim for the water lost. We'll refund the cost of any water lost from the leak, provided that this is the first burst that has occurred and it's repaired within two weeks of discovering it. **Note: we will only make one adjustment for an internal leak and one adjustment for an external leak per customer per property.**

We may also give an allowance against your wastewater charges. Visit [unitedutilities.com/bursthme](https://www.unitedutilities.com/bursthme) for full details about our leakage code of practice and to download a claim form.

Who owns the water meter?

United Utilities owns the water meter. We are responsible for maintaining, repairing and replacing it.

If I move house can the new occupier go back to charges based on the rateable value of the property?

All new occupants will be charged for their water services based on their meter readings (even if you have changed back to paying charges based on rateable value).

Can I remove the water meter?

No. It's illegal to tamper with, obstruct access to, or remove, a water meter.

Your bill

How often will you send me a bill?

You'll receive a bill every six months. This is for water and wastewater services you've already used. The date you receive your bill depends on when we read the water meter.

Your first metered bill could arrive at any time up to six months after the water meter has been fitted. If we have been unable to get either our own reading, or a reading from you, we will send you an estimated bill.

How can I pay my bill?

We offer a range of flexible ways for you to pay your bill. You can pay by Direct Debit, cash or cheque. Some customers prefer to pay each bill as it arrives, but most prefer to spread the cost over the year by choosing a budget payment scheme. We estimate how much water you'll use in a year and divide the total into regular monthly payments. The following year we'll adjust the amount you pay (up or down) based on how much water you're actually using.

Can I pay by Direct Debit?

Yes. Direct Debit takes the hassle out of paying your water bill and you can spread your payments. We'll also give you **£5** off your bill each year. Simply call us on **0345 672 2999**.

I currently pay by Direct Debit.

Do I have to fill in another form?

No, you don't have to do anything. We'll continue with your arrangement unless you tell us otherwise.

What happens to my 'old' bill after the water meter has been fitted?

Regardless of how you currently pay, please make sure you keep paying your bill until we fit the water meter.

Once the water meter has been fitted, we'll finalise your 'old' bill and, if we owe you any money, we will reduce your first metered bill by this amount. This will show as a credit balance. If you owe us money on your 'old' bill we will send you an account for the outstanding balance.

Potential savings at a glance

This table shows how much money you could potentially save each year if you have a water meter.

- Firstly, find out from your water bill how much you currently pay each year.
- Then, compare this against the number of people in your household
- The potential savings are shown in the darker boxes.
- The lighter boxes show that savings are unlikely and in most cases you are already getting the best value for money.

** Savings per year based on average consumption and number of occupants (2016/2017 prices).*

Your current yearly bill:	£300 – £400	£400 – £500	£500 – £600	£600 – £700	Potential savings*
1 person in household	£8-£108	£108-£208	£208-£308	£308-£408	
2 people in household	Savings unlikely	Small savings possible	£91-£191	£191-£291	
3 people in household	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	Small savings possible	£75-£175	
4 people in household	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	Small savings possible	
5 or more people in household	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	Savings unlikely	

These cost savings are **only a guide** and will depend upon your water usage. Please visit unitedutilities.com/meters and try our online water meter calculator for a more accurate calculation.

Your rights and responsibilities

(this is the legal bit - sorry if it all sounds a bit formal!)

This section tells you about your legal rights and responsibilities relating to your water and wastewater services charges. It covers issues such as leaks, moving premises, supply pipes and the water meter itself.

The occupier of premises is liable for charges except where another person has agreed with us to accept responsibility, in which case that person is liable.

In most landlord and tenant situations it is normally the tenant who is charged as the occupier and not the landlord. The main exceptions include the case of holiday lets, bedsits, student accommodation or other short term accommodation where the occupation of the tenants is temporary. In such cases the landlord will be treated as being in occupation.

Charges will be made when premises are occupied or furnished or where we provide services to those premises.

Unless we have reached another agreement with you, charges are payable when you receive your bill and we must receive your payment within 14 days.

We will charge you for all the water which has passed through the water meter regardless of any loss, wastage, leakage or misuse. **However, we will only make one adjustment for an internal leak and one adjustment for an external leak per customer per property.**

This is to cover both water and wastewater charges. You must have repaired the leak within any time limit we set, or at least within two weeks. Our 'Leakage code of practice' for metered domestic properties gives you more information. You can get a copy by calling us on **0345 672 2999** or by visiting **unitedutilities.com/bursthme**.

If, for any reason, we cannot establish how much water has passed through the water meter, we will estimate the amount of water used to base your charges on. If appropriate, we will adjust this charge later. For any period of time when the water meter is out of order, our estimate will be based on the most reliable information available.

If you have a measured water supply you are liable for water services charges until either:

- (i) you cease to occupy the premises (or no longer require a supply of water to them) and have given us at least two working days' notice to that effect; or
- (ii) where a water meter serves more than one premises the person who has accepted responsibility for payment of the charges gives a reasonable period of notice to end the arrangement.

In the case of (i) if you don't give notice then the charges will be payable until the next meter reading is taken or until 28 days after you inform us as provided by section 144 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

You are responsible for the water supply pipe serving your property. This is usually the section of pipe from the boundary of your property (often the garden wall) into your property. In some cases, particularly in rural areas, you may be responsible for more pipework between the part of the street in which our main is laid and your property or where the supply pipe crosses someone else's land. If you are in any doubt about your responsibility, more information may be available from the deeds of your property.

The water meter remains our property. This means that we are responsible for maintaining and eventually replacing it. We will do this at our own expense, unless the water meter has been tampered with.

Tampering with a water meter is a serious offence. You should not remove the water meter, obstruct access to it or carry out any work on it without our permission. We will recover the costs of any expense, loss or damage from the person responsible.

Occasionally we may need to test your water meter, or if you ask us to, we must test it. If you have asked us to test the water meter, and it is not faulty, you must pay for the test. For more information, visit **unitedutilities.com/leaflets** and download our 'Testing your household water meter' leaflet.

You also have the option of having the water meter tested by the Trading Standards Officer. If you wish to do this, you should contact your local Trading Standards Department directly.



About us

United Utilities is the North West's water company. We keep the taps flowing and toilets flushing for seven million customers every day. From Crewe to Carlisle, we work hard behind the scenes to help your life flow smoothly.

Application for a water meter

Save time - apply online at unitedutilities.com/meters

Alternatively, complete the application form and return to:
United Utilities, PO Box 246, Warrington, WA55 1EA



Title <i>(please tick)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please state)</i>		
Full name			
Address <i>(including postcode)</i>			
Daytime telephone number			
Evening telephone number			
Mobile telephone number			
Email			
Address for correspondence <i>(if different from above)</i>			
Date of birth			
Customer account number <i>(shown on top of your bill)</i>			
Type of property	<input type="checkbox"/> Detached <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-detached <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Residential status	<input type="checkbox"/> Owner/occupier <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant		
No. of occupants at this address			
If you are a tenant, please give the name and address of your landlord <i>(if you are resident in sheltered accommodation please provide details of the housing association)</i>			
Full name			
Address <i>(including postcode)</i>			
Telephone number			
Does your property have access to a communal supply <i>(for example, shared laundry facilities or shared hot water supply)?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Do you have a fixed term tenancy agreement of less than 6 months?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
If yes, you must obtain permission from your landlord before applying. Please tick this box to confirm you've obtained permission from your landlord to fit a meter at your property.	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I would like you to fit a water meter and confirm that I understand the conditions of having a water meter fitted. Please contact me to arrange a survey.			
Signature			
Date			
Please indicate how you would like us to contact you to arrange a survey.	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Home phone <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile		
If you have indicated telephone, what time would you prefer us to call you to arrange the survey?			
Would you prefer a morning or afternoon slot for the survey?	<input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM		