



Our Code of Practice for Domestic Customers

Introduction

It's a regulatory requirement for us to publish a Code of Practice for Domestic Customers, which provides information on the services we offer.

This document also provides details on how we operate as part of the UK Water Industry.

This document has screen reader available. If you need further support, please contact a member of our Extra Care team on 01737 785606. They're available Monday to Friday 8am until 5.30pm.

Our Code of Practice also covers a number of other areas, which can be found on page 12.



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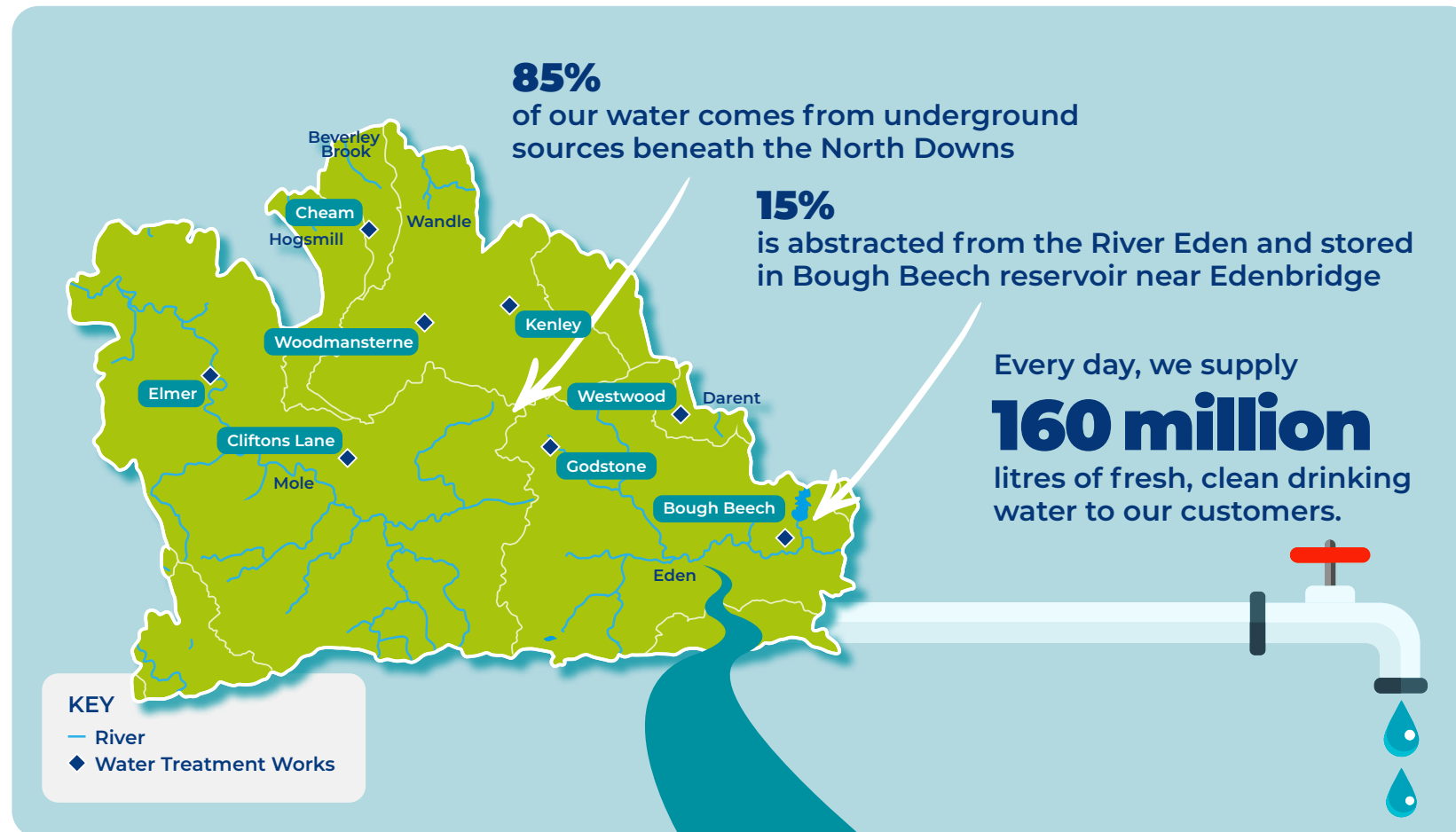


About us

We supply 160 million litres of clean water every day to over 750,000 customers comprising over 278,000 households in parts of Surrey, Kent and south London.

We have a diverse supply area covering 322 square miles.

We provide water supply services through a licence granted by the Secretary of State under the Water Industry Act 1991.



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Our regulators and watchdogs

Since 1989, when the water and sewerage industry was privatised, a regulatory framework has been in place to make sure customers receive high standards of service at a fair price. The water industry is one of the most highly regulated sectors in the UK.

See below for more information about our regulators and watchdogs.

Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)



Ofwat is the independent body responsible for the economic regulation of the Water Industry in England and Wales. One of its duties is to protect the interests of customers and making sure we meet the conditions of our license. These conditions include: restrictions on the overall increases we can make in our charges; controls on the levels of service we must provide; requirements about the information we must give our customers.

Each year, every water company also sends Ofwat a detailed breakdown of its performance. This is then used to monitor and compare companies' performances.

More information can be found at www.ofwat.gov.uk

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The Consumer Council for Water (CCW)



The Consumer Council for Water (CCW) is an independent body that represents customer interests across England and Wales. They help customers resolve complaints against their water company or retailer, while providing free advice and support.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your complaint through our own complaints' procedure, you can ask CCW to investigate it. They will then work with us to understand why we took the decisions we did.



Call them on **0300 034 2222**



Write to them at CCW, 23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham, B2 4BH



Visit their website www.ccwater.org.uk

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Please visit our Customer Information Hub seswater.co.uk/hub to see a our Complaints' Code of Practise for more information on our complaints procedure.

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The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)

The DWI provide independent reassurance that water supplies in England and Wales are safe and drinking water quality is acceptable to consumers. Their main job is to check that water companies in England and Wales supply safe drinking water that is acceptable to consumers and meets the standards set down in law. Their duties include carrying out water quality audits covering the operating practices of water companies and assessment of water company sampling programmes and results.

They publish an annual report covering water quality testing and results, public confidence in drinking water, events and technical audit activity, and they also investigate incidents or complaints relating to drinking water quality.



www.dwi.gov.uk

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Environment Agency (EA)

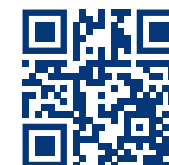


The Environment Agency is a non-departmental public body in place to protect and improve the environment in England and Wales. They determine how much water we may take from sources, such as boreholes and rivers, and the volume and quality of water we may return to the environment. This includes areas where we augment water to support river systems. They also regulate the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) - a plan of investigation and actions each company carries out to protect and enhance the natural environment.



www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency

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Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)



Defra is the UK government department responsible for improving and protecting the environment. The department supports food, farming and fishing industries, as well as rural communities, and their combined contribution to the economy.

Defra deals with all aspects of water policy in England and the regulatory systems for the water environment and water industry. They also set the overall water and sewerage policy framework in England including setting standards and drafting legislation.



[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/
department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs)

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Solving disputes

Under the Water Industry Act 1991 either we or you can refer certain disputes to Ofwat for assessment.



Their address is: Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham, B5 4UA

Disputes which can be referred to Ofwat include:

- a customer's right to a payment or credit under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme
- the charges and conditions set by a company for making connections to water mains
- the terms and conditions for a non-domestic supply
- the need for a customer's property to have a separate service pipe
- the charges and conditions for providing a water main (requisition)
- the terms and conditions for the adoption of a self-laid main, and
- a refusal to allow a customer to pay by measured charge because a meter is not practical or is unreasonably expensive to install.

The Water Industry Act, 1991 also gives you the right, in certain circumstances, to take legal proceedings against us, for any loss or damage caused to you by our failing to comply with certain of our duties under the Act.



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Water quantity

We aim to meet reasonable demand at all times, except during an emergency or during essential maintenance work.

We are obliged to provide you with enough water for 'essential' domestic purposes (i.e. for drinking, washing and cooking) and we also aim to have enough drinking water for 'non-essential' use too (such as using a hosepipe).

There may be occasions where we must restrict 'non-essential' use, such as when water resource levels are low or at times of exceptionally high demand. In this case, we may need to restrict certain uses of water (such as the use of hosepipes) after we ask customers to reduce their use. These actions are governed by our Drought Plan and are put in place so that everyone can receive adequate supplies for essential purposes. Rebates will not be made in respect of restrictions as hosepipe facilities do not incur an extra charge to unmeasured customers. Customers supplied through a meter pay on the basis of use.

We prepare a Water Resources Management Plan which sets out how we manage the balance of our supplies and demand over at least the next 25 years. We revise the plan every five years and undertake public consultation to ensure that it meets the needs and expectations of our customers, the environment, our regulators and interest groups.



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Water pressure

We aim to supply all our customers with a minimum water pressure of 10 metres (approximately 1 bar) at the boundary of their property. This is higher than the minimum standard our regulator, Ofwat, wants us to achieve.

Pressure and flow rates in your home can be affected by a number of factors including:

- the height of the property in relation to the water main and local service reservoir
- the condition, size and length of the service pipe
- whether the property shares a service pipe with other properties
- and demand during peak times

If you experience a significant change in your water pressure, please contact us using the details on page 11.



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We have policies and processes in place for testing meters to make sure the readings provided are accurate.

If we suspect there's an issue, we'll remove the meter straight away to investigate what's happened. Where needed, we can also send the meter to an independent body for further testing.

If a property with a water meter is empty, and where water is still available, standing charges will still need to be paid. This is in addition to any water usage registered by the water meter at this address.

In the event our metering equipment is damaged by a third party, we will charge to repair it. This charge will include the direct and indirect costs incurred by SES Water in fixing the damage. This will also include the cost of investigating the damage, any administration costs, the materials and labour related to the repair and reinstatement, and finally any charges by the local Highways Authority.



See page 12 for information on how to find more about our Charges Scheme, including how we would bill customers where we suspect a meter has been tampered with, or damaged.

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How to identify us

Our staff will rarely need to enter your home, and we'll usually contact you before sending someone to visit you.

All our staff wear an identity card with their name, photograph and company logo. They will also wear company uniform and arrive in a company vehicle.

However, depending on the reason we need to visit, you may see one of our partners instead, such as SES Home Services.

Both our staff and partners will always be happy to wait outside to give you time to check who they are. If you're not sure, you can call us on **01737 772000** to double check their identity.

When answering social media queries, our colleagues use official SES Water social media accounts.

Did you know we offer a password scheme?

Our Priority Services Register is designed for customers who need extra support. If you sign up, you can set up a password which we can use every time we visit you. This can give you and your loved ones more peace of mind. To sign up please visit www.seswater.co.uk/priority

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Call us

On **01737 772000**. We're available Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm. You can also use this number 24/7 for water emergencies.



Email us

Billing and account enquiries:
customerhelp@seswater.co.uk

Metering enquiries:
metering@seswater.co.uk

Financial support enquiries:
hereforyou@seswater.co.uk



Write to us

SES Water, London Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 1LJ



Visit our website

www.seswater.co.uk

We welcome calls via SignVideo to support British Sign Language (BSL).

SignVideo is a video relay service that connects our customers with a British Sign Language-trained interpreter to assist with queries and relay information to one of our agents. Our lines are open from 8am until 6pm, or 24/7 in an emergency.

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This document forms part of our important customer information, which covers key information about our services, including our charges and the support we can offer you during an incident. Please visit our Customer Information Hub for more information: seswater.co.uk/hub

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