



ESP WATER CHARGES

2023-2024 WATER AND SEWERAGE SUPPLY CHARGES



Valid for ESP Water households within the Northumbrian Water North area.

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INTRODUCTION

This document provides details of ESP Water Limited (ESPW) charges which will apply from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 inclusive for the Northumbrian Water North area in which ESPW operates. Any services outside of this area are provided by Northumbrian Water North.

ESP Water Limited is the water and wastewater services company operating in your area. We are owned by ESP Utilities Group, a company that owns and operates gas, electricity and water networks across the UK.

WHO REGULATES US?

In England, ESPW is regulated by:

- Ofwat
- Defra
- Consumer Council for Water (CCW)
- Drinking Water Inspectorate
- Environment Agency

If you would like to know more about ESPW, including our Customer Codes of Practice, please visit our website www.espwater.co.uk.

OUR CHARGES

Our charges for water and sewerage services are regulated by Ofwat and will not be higher with us than they would be if you were being supplied by Northumbrian Water. Water legislation requires that water companies charge domestic customers in accordance with a Charging Scheme.

Charges to commercial customers may however be made by agreement, rather than by this Charges Scheme, subject to approval by Ofwat and Ofwat's customer protection code of practice.

Where there has been a change in regulation or service provision from the region's incumbent supplier ESPW reserve the right to adjust this Charges Scheme during the charging year. Changes may also be made where services have changed or been incorrectly billed.

Charges are applicable when a supply of water is made available for your property, regardless of whether or not you use the supply, or if the wastewater from your property drains either directly or indirectly into a public sewer, or it benefits from any facilities that drain into a public sewer. This includes surface water drainage.

The charges cover four elements:

Clean Water (Water Supply)

This covers the costs of supplying clean water to your property. The water supply charge is based upon the volume of water your household uses, plus a standing charge which covers the cost of reading, billing and maintaining the meter and – eventually – replacing it.

Wastewater (Used water)

This covers the cost of removing, treating and/or disposing of the used water from your property. As with water supply charges, this is based upon the volume of water that your household uses. For most customers, we assume that the volume of 'water out' is 95% of the volume of 'water in', i.e. returned to sewer. A standing charge is also applied.

Surface water drainage

This covers the cost of draining rainwater from your property. Most properties pay for surface water drainage by property type (detached, semi-detached or other). However, if no rainwater from your property leaves your property boundary, then you may not have to pay this charge – for example, if all sections of the roof runoff go into soakaways within the boundary of your property.

Highway drainage

This covers the cost of draining rainwater from streets, roads and public common areas to our sewers. This is a fixed charge payable by all customers whose premises are connected to a public sewer. It covers the cost of removing and treating water that drains from streets, roads and public common areas to our sewers.

The term "Sewerage" used in consumer bills refers to wastewater, and where applicable, surface water and highway water drainage.

Metering

All properties served by ESPW are metered. Properties constructed before 1990 were given a rateable value by the local council in order to calculate council charges. This rateable value is usually used by water companies to calculate water charges on properties without a meter. However, since the way council charges are calculated has changed, councils no longer provide rateable values for new houses and water companies now tend to fit meters in order to calculate charges. This means that you will not be able to move to an unmeasured charging scheme.

We calculate the water and sewerage charges for the property using the amount recorded by the water meter plus any standing charges. Sewerage charges in this region are calculated on the assumption that 95% of the metered water you have consumed will be returned to the sewer as waste.

We aim to read your meter at least once annually and produce bills every 6 months. Where we have not been able to read your meter, your bill will be an estimation based on your average consumption. If you receive an estimated bill, you can provide us with the correct meter reading by calling us on 0330 123 4201 or submit it online to billing@esppwater.co.uk.

Water meter testing

If you suspect that your meter is faulty, you should contact us on 0330 123 4201 and request that we test it. The meter will be removed, replaced and sent to be tested. If the test confirms that the meter complies with the limits of error set in the Measuring Equipment (Cold-water Meters) Regulations

1988, you will be liable for the cost of the test, including replacement of the meter, postage and packaging and other admin costs, up to a maximum of £70 (plus VAT) for domestic meters.

If the meter is found to be faulty, charges will be adjusted to reflect the correct level of consumption either from the date that the meter became faulty, or if this is not known then from the date of the last but one meter reading.

If you have any disputes about meter testing, you can request that it is referred to an independent arbitrator.

If the meter does not appear to us to provide an accurate record of the water supplied to the premises, we will estimate the consumption based on what we consider to be the most reliable data available, including the average consumption for earlier comparable periods. Estimated charge may be adjusted subsequently if more reliable data becomes available.

Meter installation

Water meters and any associated equipment will be positioned in accordance with the Meters Regulations and must record the total use of water at your premises. The water meter will usually be outside your property but may be inside if we need it to be.

Standing Charges

The water standing charge (or fixed charge) is calculated on a daily basis. This charge is based on our published tariff for this service.

For sewerage services, a standing charge will be levied if wastewater from the property drains (directly or indirectly) into the sewer. A standing charge for surface water drainage will also be charged. Please contact ESPW if you believe that you may be exempt from surface water drainage charges.

Volumetric Charges

Volumetric water charges are based on the measured water consumption at your property recorded by your water meter.

Volumetric sewerage charges assume that 95% of the water recorded on the meter is returned to the sewer. However, you may be entitled to a reduction in your sewerage charges if greater than 5% of your wastewater does not end up in our sewer.

You must be able to clearly demonstrate and provide evidence to us that this is the case, for example, by using a sub meter. Please refer to the ESPW web site: www.espwater.co.uk for guidance.

LEAKAGE

If you have received a large bill as a result of a leak from underground pipework, you may be entitled to a leakage allowance.

Further details can be found in our Code of Practice on Leakage, which can be obtained

either by downloading it from our website at www.espwater.co.uk or by calling us on 0330 123 4201. The leakage allowance is subject to the conditions set out in the Code of Practice.

OTHER TARIFFS

We offer an alternative tariff for metered domestic homes that may experience particular hardship and who need to use large amounts of water. The WaterSure tariff allows these customers to have their water bills capped.

WaterSure Tariffs

WaterSure provides financial assistance to household customers with a water meter who use large amounts of water for essential purposes. You may be eligible if you or any member of your household receives any of the following benefits/tax credits:

- Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit (except families in receipt of the family element only)
- Pension Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

In addition, you need to either:

- be responsible, and receive child benefit, for three or more children under the age of 19 living in the property, **or**
- have (or someone living in the property must have) a medical condition which requires significant additional use of water. Examples of medical conditions include:
 - Desquamation (flaky skin disease)
 - Weeping skin disease (eczema, psoriasis, varicose ulceration)
 - Incontinence

- Abdominal stoma
- Crohn's disease
- Ulcerative colitis
- Renal failure requiring home dialysis (except where the health authority contributes to the cost of the water used in dialysis)
- Any other medical condition that uses significant volumes of water and can be supported by a doctor's certificate

You must inform us immediately if you cease to qualify for the WaterSure tariff. At the end of the charging year, the charges will be adjusted if necessary. Such that your charges do not exceed the amount you would have paid under the standard measured tariff or any other tariff for which you would have qualified if you had not applied for the WaterSure tariff.

We may check entitlement to the tariff through visits, periodic requests for proof of benefits entitlement or medical condition and periodic checks with Jobcentre Plus, the DWP, Inland Revenue, the Pension Service or by contacting your medical practitioner.

For more details or to apply for the WaterSure scheme please download the WaterSure application form available on our website at www.espwater.co.uk or call our customer services team on 0330 123 4201.

Social Tariffs

ESPW will seek to offer social tariffs offered by local incumbent water companies upon request from a customer.

LIABILITY FOR CHARGES

You are liable for water and sewerage charges if any of the following is true:

- You are the occupier of the property
- You have sufficient control over the property to owe a duty of care towards those who come lawfully onto the premises
- You own or maintain property, furnished or otherwise, ready for occupation, letting, sale or commercial use

Charges should always be paid by the occupier of the property unless we agree otherwise. The occupier is liable for charges applied to every connected water and sewage service point where a service is provided by us.

If more than one person shares a property, everyone is responsible, even if the bill is only in the name of one occupier. All occupiers are jointly and severally liable, meaning that we can recover our charges from any one or all occupiers.

Charges are applicable when a supply of water is made available for your property, regardless of whether or not you use the supply, or if the wastewater from your property drains either directly or indirectly

into a public sewer, or it benefits from any facilities that drain into a public sewer. This includes surface water drainage.

Tenants

If you're a tenant, you are responsible for paying the bill, unless your landlord has made another agreement with us. If there is no such agreement or we have not received written confirmation from the landlord that they are responsible for the bill, you will be responsible for paying the bill. In some cases, we will hold you and the landlord jointly responsible. This happens if the landlord has failed to provide us with certain information that they are required to provide to us.

Mixed-Use premises

Mixed use premises are those premises that are used partly as a person's home and partly for business purposes and which receive a single supply of water. The Household Charges in this document will only apply if the premises is primarily used as a home. If the premises are used primarily as a business, then your retail provider's tariffs will apply to you as if the whole of the premises was a non-domestic premise.

VALUE ADDED TAX

VAT is applied in accordance with prevailing HMRC legislation. There is currently no VAT on domestic charges. VAT will be charged where legally required to do so for non-households.

MOVING HOME

If you are moving into a property, please contact us with an opening meter read. If you are moving out of the property, please ensure that you give us at least two working days' notice.

If you do not give us two working days notice, you will be liable for charges until whichever of the following occurs first:

- The new occupier contacts us and informs us that they are now responsible for the charges
- The twenty-eighth day after we are informed
- The date on which the meter would normally have been read in order to calculate the final bill

Once the correct data has been provided, ESPW will provide a final bill. If there is a credit on the account, a refund will be provided.

If we do not receive a final meter read from you, we will use an estimated meter reading to calculate your final bill.

Where a customer moves out of a property without notifying us and a new customer moves in without notifying us, we will need to take a meter reading in order to calculate the average daily use and use this calculation to determine the amount owed by the new customer since the date they moved in.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

By Direct Debit

Payment by Direct Debit is the easiest way to pay your water bills as it gives you control over your budgeting, with a choice of payment dates and instalments spread across the year. If you choose to pay monthly, ESPW will work out how much you need to pay each month and adjust this where necessary to ensure that you are paying the correct amount to cover the charges for your consumption.

The Direct Debit Guarantee means ESPW will notify you at least 14 working days in advance if the amount you are paying, or the payment date needs to change. If an error is made by either ESPW or your bank or building society, you will get a full and immediate refund.

You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your bank or building society – please send ESPW a copy of the letter so that we can manage your account and help to prevent any arrears.

ESPW do not offer a discount for direct debit payers.

Credit/Debit Card

You can call us on 0330 123 4201 and use your credit or debit card to pay over the telephone (please have your ESPW account number to hand). You can choose to pay your bill in full or to pay an instalment.

By Post

You can pay your bill by cheque either in full or by agreed instalments. Please make your cheque(s) payable to ESP Water Ltd. Please write your 9-digit account number (made up of eight numbers and a check digit) on the back of the cheque and send it to:

**ESP Water Limited
Finance team
Bluebird House
Mole Business Park
Leatherhead
KT22 7BA**

DIFFICULTIES PAYING YOUR BILLS

We understand that it can sometimes be difficult to manage your financial outgoings. If you are having difficulties paying your bills, then please contact us as soon as possible to discuss alternative payment options. Wherever possible ESP will seek to offer a flexible, personal process for customers facing payment difficulties.

If you receive income support, job seekers allowance, pension credits, universal credits or Employment and Support Allowances (ESA) from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), you may be able to arrange to make payments directly from your benefit under Water Direct. This only applies if you are in arrears with your water bill. Please contact DWP for more details and make sure you let us know.

Domestic Debt Recovery

If you are having problems paying your bills ESPW are here to help. Please contact us as soon as possible to discuss alternative payment options. Further details can be found in our Debt Code of Practice which can be obtained either by downloading it from our website at www.espwater.co.uk or by calling us on 0330 123 4201.

Bankruptcy

If you are granted an Order for Bankruptcy which encompasses a water and sewerage charge debt, the debt will be limited to the charges that are outstanding as at the date of the Order for Bankruptcy, included any charges accrued on a daily basis. Any charges that accrue from the day after the Order for Bankruptcy shall be due as if the property had been newly occupied on that day.

We understand that it can sometimes be difficult to manage your financial outgoings. If you are having problems paying your bills ESPW are here to help. Please contact us on [0330 123 4201](tel:03301234201) or email us at billing@espwater.co.uk as soon as possible to discuss alternative payment options

COMPLAINTS

ESPW aim to provide our customers with the highest standard of service at all times. However, we know that we may not always get it right. When this happens, you should contact us so that we can try to resolve the problem as soon as possible.

Our complaints process

If you wish to make a complaint regarding any aspect of our service, then the quickest way to get it resolved is to call us on 0330 123 4201. Alternatively, you can get in touch by email or letter. We will respond to any complaints within 5 working days.

Details of our customer complaints procedure can be found in our Customer Code of Practice on our website www.espwater.co.uk

If we have fully reviewed your complaint and you still remain dissatisfied, then you can ask the Consumer Council for Water (CCW) to review your case. CCW is the independent body which represents customers' interests and investigates unresolved complaints.

CCWater

Tel: 0300 034 2222
Email: enquiries@ccwater.org.uk
Website: ccwater.org.uk
Address: 23 Stephenson Street,
Birmingham, B2 4BH

SCHEDULE A: ESP WATER 2023/24 DOMESTIC TARIFFS

This section of the document sets out our water and sewerage charges for 2023-24 for Northumbrian Water's supply zones in the North. ESPW will charge no more than the equivalent charge levied by Northumbrian Water to equivalent properties within these zones.

Please contact ESPW if you feel the charges being provided are not applicable to your area. All premises supplied by ESP Water will be metered, and we calculate the volumetric sewerage charge on the assumption that 95% of water recorded by the meter will be discharged to the sewers.

If none of the surface water from your premises enters the public sewer, or you pay a third party for disposal of surface water, you may be entitled to a reduction in surface water charges.

Domestic Water Supply Tariffs (All properties)

	Annual Fixed Charge (£ per annum)	Volumetric Water Charge (£ per cubic metre)
Bracks Farm, Bishop Auckland	£45.09	£1.2381
Burdon Lane, Ryhope, Sunderland	£45.09	£1.2381
WaterSure Tariff	Capped at £162.81 total per annum.	

This charge applies to a 15mm meter which would normally be fitted in a household premises. Where a larger meter is fitted, additional charges may apply.

*These are WATER ONLY sites. Customers will receive bills for water from ESPW and bills for sewerage services direct from Northumbrian Water.

Domestic Sewerage Discharge Tariffs (All properties)

	Fixed Charges		Volumetric Water Charge Foul Water (£ per cubic meter)
	Surface Water (£ per annum)	Foul Water (£ per annum)	
Bracks Farm, Bishop Auckland	£58.76	£29.56	£0.9841
Burdon Lane, Ryhope, Sunderland	£58.76	£29.56	£0.9841
WaterSure Tariff	Capped at £173.16 total per annum		

SCHEDULE B: OTHER CHARGES

Water meter testing

Where the water meter accuracy is outside the prescribed limits of the Meter Regulations	No charge
Where the water meter accuracy is within the prescribed limits of the Meter Regulations	£70.00 (plus VAT)

HOW TO CONTACT US



YOU CAN WRITE TO US AT:

ESP Water
Blue Bird House
Mole Business Park
Leatherhead
KT22 7BA



YOU CAN CALL US ON:

0330 123 4201

Our office hours for billing and
account queries are:

Monday - Friday 08:30 - 17:30
excluding bank holidays



YOU CAN EMAIL US AT:

For billing related enquiries:
billing@espwater.co.uk

For all other enquiries:
GeneralEnquiries@espwater.co.uk



YOU CAN VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

espwater.co.uk



EMERGENCIES CONTACT:

For any emergencies with your water or wastewater supplies please call our
24-hour emergency number on 0330 123 4201