

Mua Water Household Charges 2024-25

**Charges for mua Water customers
within the Northumbrian Water
network area**

April 2024

mua Water Household Charges 2023-24: for customers within the Northumbrian Water network area	
Introduction	3
Contacting mua Water	3
About our household charges	4
About the meter	5
If you suspect a leak	5
Other tariffs: WaterSure	5
Who pays the bill?	6
Moving house	7
How to pay your bill	8
If you have difficulty paying your bill	9
Commercial and mixed use premises	10
VAT	10
If you have a complaint	10
Our regulators	11
Schedule of household charges	12

Introduction

This booklet explains your water and wastewater charges from mua Water in the period from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025 for **households** in areas mua Water serves including Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham and parts of North Yorkshire, and also Essex and Suffolk (and where the bulk services come from Northumbrian Water).

We are mua Water, the independent water and wastewater services company operating in your area. We own and operate water, gas and electricity last mile networks across the North and Midlands of England and are owned by SGN and Murphy Group.

If you are a new customer, we are delighted to welcome you to our growing base of water customers and we look forward to bringing you the benefits and fresh approach that an independent operator provides.

This document gives details of our household charges that apply from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Our schedule of charges at the end of the document sets out the areas where the charges apply. If you are unsure of your supplier you can check on our website.

Contacting mua Water

You can e-mail us on the following addresses:

enquiries: developerservices@muagroup.co.uk

You can call us on: 0333 000 0001
Our office hours for billing and account queries are 09:00-17:30 Monday-Friday, excluding bank holidays

You can log a query on our website:

<https://www.muagroup.co.uk/contact>

In an **EMERGENCY**, you can call our 24 hour emergency number

0800 011 4193 / 01543 466 711

About our household charges

As a mua Water customer, you will not pay any more for your water than you would if you were being supplied by your local water and sewerage provider(s). We have different charges depending on the area where you live, mirroring the charges you would pay with the local suppliers.

All of our customers are metered, which means that all of our charges are based on the volume that your household uses. All new properties in England are charged in this way. Our charges are structured as follows:

- **CLEAN WATER** – we charge for the costs of supplying clean drinking water to your property. We base this on the volume of water your household uses, plus a fixed charge covering the cost of billing, reading the meter and maintaining the meter.
- **WASTEWATER** – we charge for the costs of removing, treating and/or disposing of the used water from your property. This is also based on the volume of water your household uses. For most customers, we assume that the volume of 'water in' is the same as the volume of 'water out', i.e. 100% of the water you use will be returned to the public sewer. We apply standing charges for foul sewage, highway drainage and surface water drainage.

We calculate all standing charges daily based on the annual amounts set out in our schedule of charges.

We will send you a bill every six months. This will either be based on a meter read or on an estimate of how much water your household has used. We aim to read your meter at least once per year. If you receive an estimated bill, you can provide us with the correct meter reading by contacting us on 01543 466 711 or through our website.

If there is a change in regulation or service provision from the region's incumbent supplier, mua Water reserve the right to adjust this Charges Scheme during the charging year. Changes to your charges may also be made where mua Water services have changed or been incorrectly billed.

If you believe you may be exempt from the surface water drainage charge you should contact us on 01543 466 711. You will need to provide evidence to us that none of the surface water from your property drains to our assets.

If you use large amounts of water that will not be returned to the sewer (for example watering a garden), and you do not wish to pay sewerage charges on this

water, then you must provide evidence to us demonstrating this, for example by using a sub meter. Please refer to our web site for guidance.

About the meter

The water meter will normally be situated in the pavement outside the property boundary. If you live in a flat, the meter may be in a different place, for example in the communal area outside your flat or in the stairwell.

If you suspect your meter is faulty you can contact us on 0800 011 4193 / 01543 466 711 to ask for a meter test. If the meter is confirmed to be faulty, we will replace the meter for you at no cost. We will also adjust your charges from the point when the meter was known to have become faulty or if this is not known, from the last but one bill, or if we think the consumption is not likely to be accurate and estimate based on reliable records of your past consumption.

If the test finds that the meter is operating within statutory tolerance limits¹, we will charge you the cost of the test, replacing the meter and our administration costs up to a maximum of £70 plus VAT for household meters. If you are not happy with the outcome of a meter test, you can ask us to refer the dispute to an independent arbiter.

If you suspect a leak

If you receive a bill that is much higher than normal and suspect a leak on your supply pipe (the pipe running from the meter to your property), you may be eligible for a leak allowance. You can find our Leakage Code of Practice on our website or be calling 0800 011 4193 / 01543 466 711. This sets out the process and what you need to do to get the allowance and fix the leak on your pipe.

Other tariffs: WaterSure

We offer the WaterSure tariff, which provides financial assistance to household customers who may be in hardship and who need to use large amounts of water for essential purposes. Your bill will be capped at the regional average. You must meet the criteria in two areas to qualify for the tariff.

¹ The standards are set out in the Measuring Equipment (Cold-water Meters) Regulations 1988.

Firstly, if you or any member of your household receives any of the following benefits/ tax credits:

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

Secondly, 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 that 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

If you think you may qualify for this tariff, you can call us on 0333 000 0001 or download the form from our website. If you need help you with the form or the evidence needed just let us know.

Who pays the bill?

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.

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The occupier is liable for charges applied to every connected water and sewage service point where we provide a service. 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.

In the case of two premises being supplied by one meter, the occupiers of each of the premises supplied through that meter shall be jointly and severally liable for the whole of the charges calculated by reference to the water passing through that meter.

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

Unless we agree otherwise, charges remain payable when your premises are empty. Where premises are empty due to death, long term hospitalisation or care, we may on request waive all or part of the charges. If we find that the premises are occupied, we will levy full charges back to the last known date of occupation and may charge you a fee as shown in the schedule of charges.

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 the information that we need.

Moving house

If you are moving into a property served by mua Water, please contact us with an opening meter read. If you are moving out of the property, please make sure to 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 we have the correct data, mua Water will provide a final bill. If there is a credit on the account, we will provide a refund. If we do not receive a final meter read from you, we will use an estimated meter reading to calculate your final bill.

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

We will back bill as required within our legal rights to do so if there is a delay in identifying a new customer.

How to pay your bill

DIRECT DEBIT

Direct debit is the easiest way to pay your water bills, and allows you to budget by spreading your payments across the year. If you choose direct debit, mua Water will initially estimate a monthly charge appropriate to your likely household consumption that we will adjust as needed so you are paying the right amount.

The direct debit guarantee requires us to notify you at least 14 working days in advance of the amount you will be paying monthly and of any changes to that amount. If we, your bank or building society make an error you will get an immediate full refund.

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

CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD

Please call us on 0333 000 0001 to pay your bill by credit or debit card. You should have your account number to hand – this is the number printed on your bill. You can pay in full or in instalments.

If you have difficulty paying your bill

We understand that managing your household bills can sometimes be difficult – and we're here to help. If you are having difficulty paying your bills please contact us as soon as possible so that we can explore options to help you avoid getting into further arrears. Wherever possible, mua Water will seek to offer flexible payment options that suit your individual needs.

Our contact details are 0333 000 0001

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 benefits under WaterDirect. 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.

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.

If you fall into arrears and we incur costs in securing payment from you, we reserve the right to recover those costs and interest on the outstanding debt. Our debt code of practice contains more information about how we handle customer debt is available on our website or you can call us on 0333 000 0001 if you want us to send it to you.

Commercial and mixed use premises

If you are a commercial customer, this charges statement does not apply to you. Charges may be made by agreement by our commercial retail partner, rather than by this Charges Scheme, and are subject to approval by Ofwat and Ofwat's customer protection code of practice. For more information about commercial charges and your option to switch supplier, please visit our website.

Mixed use premises are used partly as a person's home and partly for business purposes and 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 non-domestic.

VAT

We will apply VAT to our charges where we are legally required to do so in accordance with prevailing HMRC legislation. There is currently no VAT on domestic water and wastewater charges. VAT may be applicable to work carried out, such as meter testing.

If you have a complaint

We want to deliver great service to our customers and put things right as quickly as possible if we get it wrong. If we haven't provided the high quality of service you expect, please contact us on:

Tel: 0800 011 4193
Website <https://www.muagroup.co.uk/contact>

We will respond to any complaints within 5 working days. Our customer code of practice contains more details about how we address complaints. It's available on our website or you can call us on 0800 011 4193 if you want us to send it to you.

If we have fully reviewed your complaint and you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Consumer Council for Water (CCW) to review your case. CCW is the independent voice for water consumers in England and Wales, whose remit includes investigating unresolved complaints. You can contact CCW using the following:

CCWATER

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

If your complaint remains unresolved after CCW has fully reviewed it, you may be eligible to refer your complaint to the Water Industry Redress Scheme (WATRS),

who can provide an independent binding decision. WATRS' contact details are as follows:

WATRS

Tel: 020 7520 3801
Email: info@watrs.org
Website: watrs.org
Address: WATRS International, Dispute Resolution Centre, 70 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1EU

Our regulators

mua Water is a regulated company operating in England. Our regulators are:

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

Ofwat regulates our charges, which must be no more than you would pay if you were served by the local provider. We also send our draft charges statements to CCW for review each year.

We have legal obligations to issue a Charging Scheme each year, and the legislation also sets out how we can charge our customers.

Schedule of household charges

The charges set out below apply to our operating areas:

- Albert Street, Hebburn

HOUSEHOLD MEASURED WATER CHARGES

These charges apply to all the operating areas listed above.

HOUSEHOLD MEASURED WATER CHARGE	UNITS	CHARGE
Water volumetric charge	£ per cubic metre	£1.3920
Water standing charge (0-24mm Meter Size)	£ per year	£50.26

WASTEWATER CHARGES

These charges apply to all the operating areas listed above.

HOUSEHOLD MEASURED WATER CHARGE	UNITS	CHARGE
Sewerage volumetric charge	£ per cubic metre	£ 1.0767
Sewerage standing charge (includes surface water drainage)	£ per year	£100.47
Surface water drainage charge	£ per year	£64.62

WATERSURE TARIFF

WATERSURE CHARGES	UNITS	CHARGE
Water supply	Capped charge, £ per year	£ 173.31
Sewerage services	Capped charge, £ per year	£187.75

SUNDRY CHARGES – WATER METER TESTING

WATER METER TESTING CHARGES	UNITS	CHARGE
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