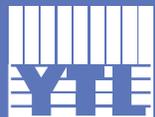


# Every Customer Matters - a summary

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**Wessex Water**  
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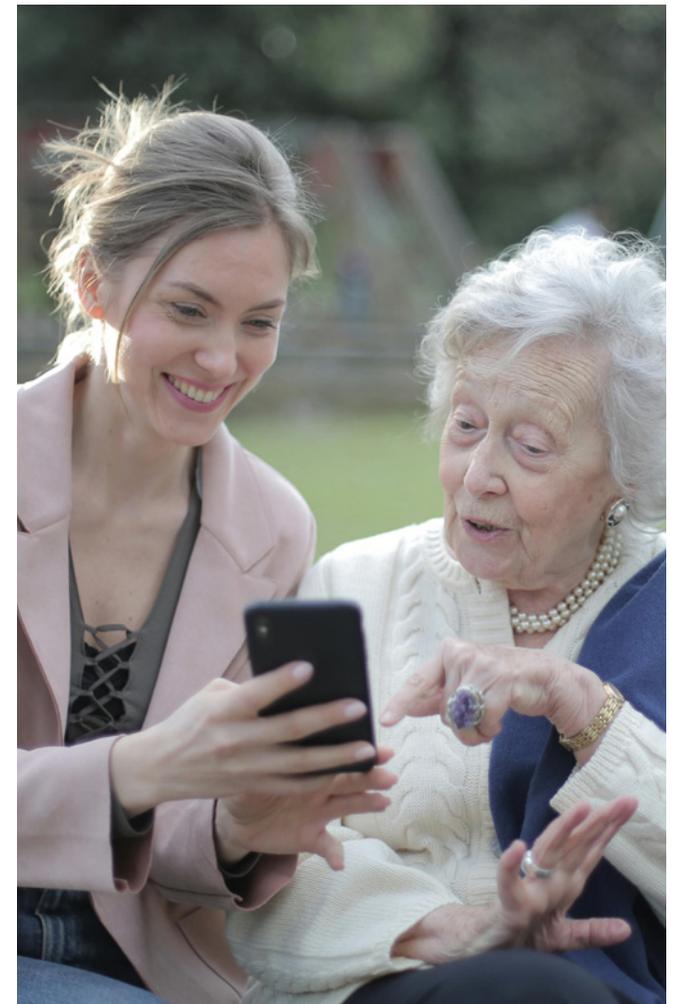
FOR YOU. FOR LIFE.

# Every Customer Matters

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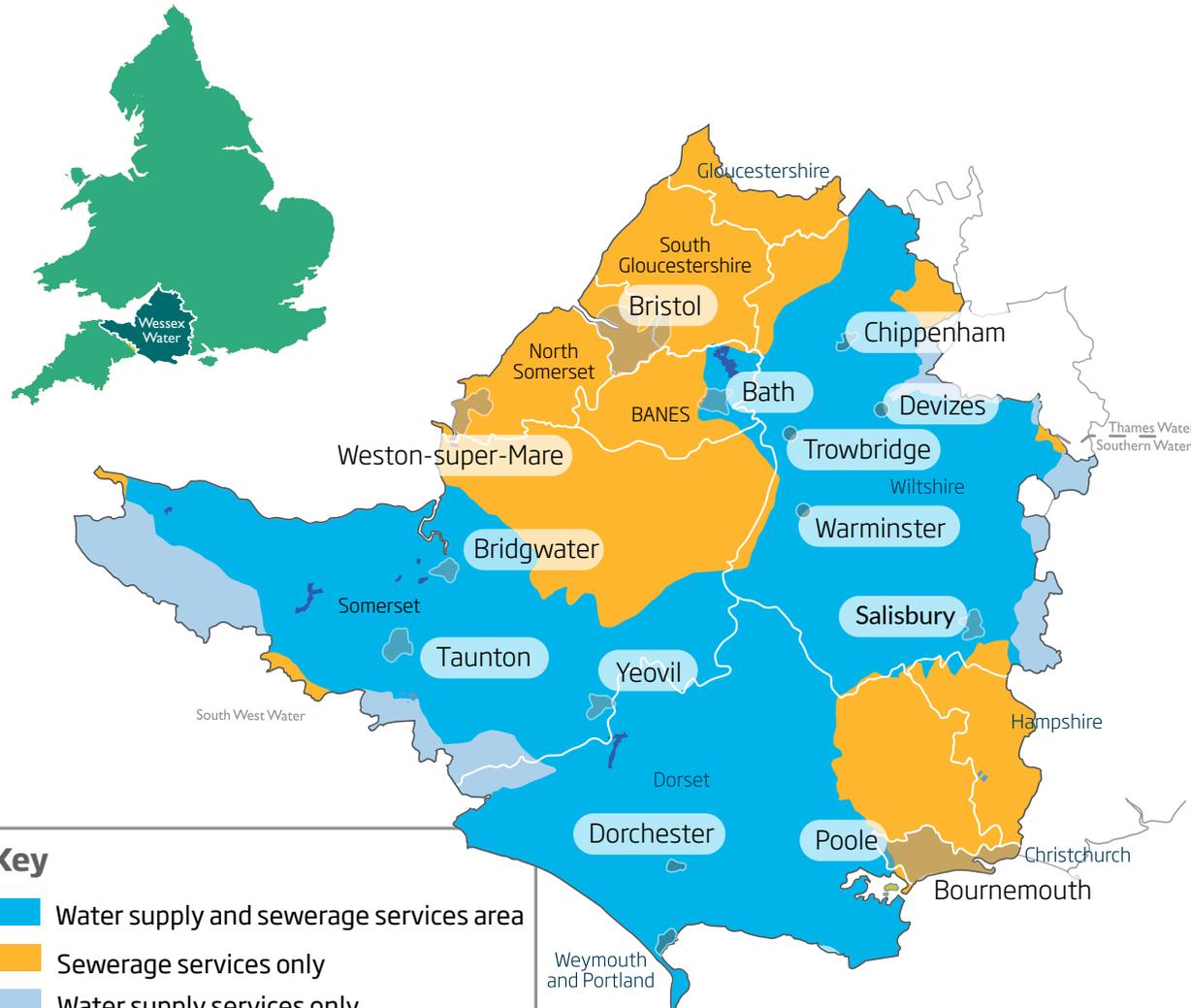
To navigate through this report, please click on the page number in the contents or use the menu bar at the top of each page



# Who we are

We are a regional water and sewerage company covering 2.9 million customers across the southwest of England.

Our main purpose is to provide our customers and communities with excellent service and value for money, while also protecting and improving the environment.



## Our region

Our region includes the areas of Dorset, Somerset and Bristol as well as most of Wiltshire and parts of Gloucestershire and Hampshire.

The region's landscape is varied, ranging from the Mendip Hills and the levels of Somerset to the cliffs of Dorset and Wiltshire's Salisbury Plain. Within the region is the world heritage city of Bath; the seaside resort of Weston-super-Mare, famous for its Grand Pier and Dorset, home to the Jurassic Coast Natural World Heritage Site.

If your water is supplied by Bristol Water but you receive your sewerage services from us, you will receive a combined bill from both companies.

Current accreditations	Aims for 2025-2030
Compliant with the <b>Dementia Friendly Utilities Guide</b>	Achieve certification for <b>ISO 22458:2022</b> in inclusive service
<b>Customer Service Excellence</b> - maintained	
<b>Keep Me Posted Best Practice Mark</b>	
<b>British Standard for Inclusive Service (BS 18477)</b>	<b>WCAG 2.1 AA</b> which ensures accessibility

These plans and accreditations reflect our commitment to supporting customers and enhancing our services.

# Our ethos – Every Customer Matters

At Wessex Water, we believe that every customer matters. This booklet provides a summary of the extra help we can provide to people who need it, who might be eligible and how you can access these services.

This could be help with your water bill, support during a water supply incident, or a password when we visit you.

We have been constantly evolving the services we provide to meet the changing needs and expectations of our customers.

You can get more details by going to: [wessexwater.co.uk/vulnerability-strategy](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/vulnerability-strategy)

## We always go the extra mile - GEM

Our customers are at the very heart of our business. Going the extra mile sums up our approach to customer service and we encourage our employees to put themselves in your shoes and give them the confidence to achieve the best possible outcome.

## We are accessible for everyone

We are committed to achieving the highest levels of customer satisfaction through your preferred communication channel, building trust and loyalty along the way.

## We provide an inclusive service

We provide an inclusive service, often tailoring our approach to meet specific needs. Customers and organisations representing you help us design services that cater to these needs.

## We actively look for signs of extra needs and requirements

Our staff receive specialist training to enhance their skills and knowledge, ensuring quality interactions. They are equipped to handle complex situations with compassion and sensitivity.



## Providing choice

We offer a range of channels for you to interact and communicate with us.



*There are many ways we can help you. Whether this is short-term or you need longer-term support, we are here to help.*

# We provide help to pay your bill

---

There are many ways we can help you. Whether this is short-term or you need longer-term support, we are here for you by treating you with respect and understanding. It might be lower bills, advice on saving water or help repaying debt. If you're struggling to pay your bills or falling into debt, the following pages explain how we can help.

## Payment breaks

If your circumstances have changed or you need a little more time to pay, a payment break could help.

### How does it work?

A payment break will stop your payments for a limited time. This is designed to help you get back on track with your payments.

## Flexible payment plan

If you are having short-term problems paying, we can offer you a flexible payment plan.

### How does it work?

A flexible payment plan will allow you to pay less towards your water bill for an agreed period of time and catch up on payments later.

## Bill cap scheme - WaterSure

We can cap your water bill if you are on a water meter, use a lot of water for reasons you can't control and receive certain income-related benefits.

### Who can apply?

To qualify for WaterSure, you must receive one of the main means-tested benefits or tax credits.

You must also either receive Child Benefit for three or more children under the age of 19 living in your household, or someone in your household must use more water because of a medical condition.

### How does it work?

We will cap your bill in line with the average metered bill. If you use less, you will only pay for what you use.

## Discount for low-income pensioners

If you're a pensioner, you could be entitled to a discount on your water and/or sewerage bill.

### Who can apply?

You can apply if we provide you with water and/or sewerage services and all the adults in your household receive Pension Credit or the State Pension is your (and their) only income.



## We provide help to pay your bill (continued)

### Debt support scheme - Restart

If debt is affecting your ability to pay, you could be eligible for Restart.

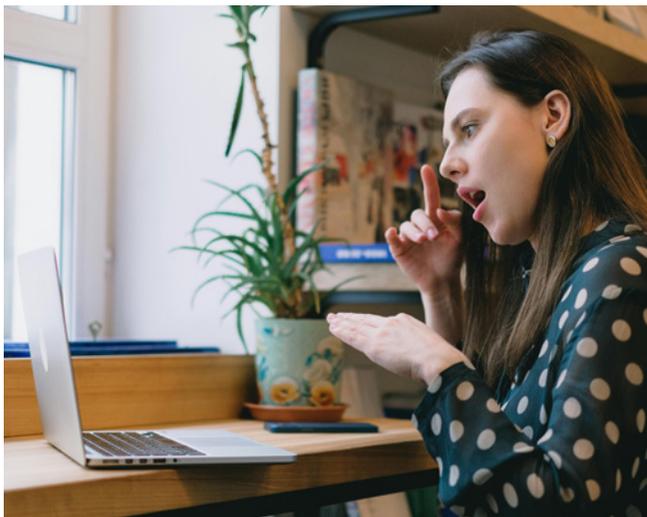
#### Who can apply?

Restart is designed for customers who have significant water debt they can't repay and cannot afford their ongoing water bills.

#### How does it work?

You will have to pay the charges for the current year. We will then reduce your debt by an equivalent amount at the end of the year.

If you continue to pay your current charges in year two, we will clear your remaining debt.



### Reduced bill - Assist

Apply for Assist to receive a reduced bill based on your ability to pay.

#### Who can apply?

Assist is for those who are struggling and need a large discount on their bill.

### Reduced bill for care leavers

Care leavers can get a 90% reduction on their water and sewerage bill.

#### Who can apply?

If you're a care leaver under the age of 21.

### Using benefit payments - Water Direct

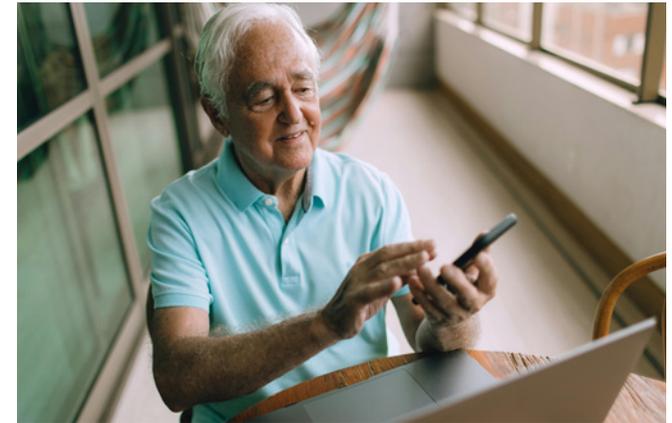
If you are behind on your water bill and receive benefits, we can take payments directly from your benefits.

#### Who can apply?

You will need to owe us more than £50.

You or someone in your household must also receive at least one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit
- Pension Credit.



### Find out more or apply for support

visit [wessexwater.co.uk/help-to-pay](https://wessexwater.co.uk/help-to-pay) or

**Contact us** - find details on page 14.

The following organisations will offer free independent advice.

#### **Citizens Advice**

0800 144 8848

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

#### **StepChange**

0800 138 1111

[www.stepchange.org](https://www.stepchange.org)

#### **Money Wellness**

0161 518 8282

[www.moneywellness.com](https://www.moneywellness.com)

# Supporting customers who need extra help – Priority Services

Priority Services is designed for anyone who needs extra help. By signing up for free you can choose which services you would like to receive from us. The following pages explain the support we can offer for a range of conditions, illnesses and situations. We understand that you might need more of these services depending on your circumstance.

## Age

- are of a pensionable age
- have children under the age of five.



## Communication

- are blind or partially sighted
- are unable to communicate in English
- have a hearing impairment or are deaf
- have a speech impairment
- have a developmental condition, eg, autism, Asperger's or dyslexia.



## Medical conditions

- have a chronic or serious illness
- are medically dependent on showering or bathing
- have a mental health condition
- need a constant supply of water (water dependent)
- have a cognitive impairment, including dementia.

## Medical equipment

- nebuliser or sleep apnoea monitor
- heart or lung ventilator
- dialysis machine, feeding pump or automated medication
- oxygen concentrator or require oxygen therapy
- stair lift, hoist or electric bed
- careline/telecare system
- medicine refrigerator.

## Mobility

- have a physical impairment
- are unable to answer the door
- have restricted hand movement.



## Safety

- have a poor sense of taste or smell
- would like additional presence when we visit you.

## A temporary change

- are going through a significant life change such as bereavement or divorce, losing your job or being unable to cope with everyday life
- are a young adult householder (under 18)
- are recovering after being in hospital.

## Priority Services (continued)

### Ways we can help

#### Your bill and other communication

You can receive your bill and other information in a way that's easiest for you.

You can choose to:

- have your bills or information about our services sent to a carer, family member or friend
- receive it in different formats such as braille, large print or another language
- ask us to call or visit your home to read your bill to you.

You can also communicate with us through:

- a nominated point of contact such as a carer, family member or friend
- our live chat
- Relay UK text
- home visits
- interpreters on our dedicated language line
- British Sign Language translation.

#### Support during incidents

If we need to carry out work near you, we may have to temporarily turn off your water supply, but we will always write to you in advance.

Sometimes unplanned interruptions, like burst water mains, can leave customers with no water. We will contact you to keep you informed throughout and ask if you need extra help - for example, checking if you need any bottled water delivered urgently.

If you use dialysis equipment or have a particular need for water, we will try to plan our work around your needs.

We will consider any evacuation plans you may have in place and also help with any third party support you may need - just let us know as and when this will apply to you when you are notified of any work we need to do.

For more information on how we can support you in an incident visit:

[wessexwater.co.uk/incident-management](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/incident-management)

#### Reading or moving your meter

- we can help if you have trouble reading your meter.
- we usually take two meter readings a year to calculate your bills, but if you get in touch, we can take an additional two readings for you.
- if your meter is not accessible, we can move it for free to a more suitable place if it is practical to do so.

#### Knock and wait or password service

- if you have a particular need which means it may take a while to answer your door, don't worry, we will wait for you.
- you can also set up a password and we'll use it every time we visit you. Always make sure your password is unique to you to avoid identity fraud.
- the password can be in your chosen format. Hard of hearing customers, for example, can ask for their password to be written down if someone visits their home.
- if you receive a visit from one of our team, remember to ask to see their identity card before you let them inside your home.

#### A nominated contact

- you can appoint someone to manage your water and/or sewerage account or speak to us on your behalf such as a carer, family member or friend.
- they will be our first point of contact and responsible for your financial affairs.

#### Additional services

- we'll give you advanced warning in the unlikely event our workforce is planning to strike.
- ensure that any streetworks being carried out in your area consider customers' needs.

#### Find help through the National Support Network

We have partnered with the National Support Network to provide extra support for customers in need.

Visit: [rwg.nsn.org.uk](https://www.rwg.nsn.org.uk) to access free advice, support and helplines from a variety of charities and organisations.

#### Free for you

Visit [wessexwater.co.uk/saving-water](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/saving-water) to find out how to save water and order FREE water saving products.



## Priority Services (continued)

### How to sign up

#### Apply today

Visit	<a href="https://wessexwater.co.uk/priority-services">wessexwater.co.uk/priority-services</a>
Call	0345 600 3 600
Form	Fill in one of our paper forms
Live chat	One of our agents can sign you up
Face to face	Through one of our team or partners we work with



#### What to expect once you have signed up to our Priority Services Register

##### A warm welcome

Once you have registered, you will receive a welcome letter to confirm we have added you to our register.

##### This will include:

- what services you have signed up to, including any communication needs you have selected, if you have chosen a nominee or a password for when we visit
- how we will support you during an incident, how we communicate with you during this time and what you can expect
- our promise to knock and wait if you need more time to answer the door when we visit
- information on how to save water in your home
- advice on how to prepare for an emergency and how you can prevent issues in your home
- if you find it hard to read your meter, we may be able to move it or we can read your meter up to four times a year at your request
- in the unlikely event our workforce strikes we will give you advanced warning
- as much as we can, plan our works around your treatment if you receive it at home and make consideration to streetworks around your needs
- if you have evacuation plans in place for emergency situations we can support and liaise with any third-party support such as the NHS.

#### We will also tell you:

- how we will use your data
- the information we share with other organisations and how to opt out
- our contact details if you ever need to get in touch with us
- what to do if your situation ever changes
- how to get help with their bills and debt as well as signposting to additional support they may need.

#### Checking in with you

We will check in with you every two years to make sure we are providing you with the best possible service.

Within each two-year period, we will try to contact you twice by text, email or post.

This will help us to ensure your details are up to date or if your details have changed so that we can fully support you and tailor our service to your needs.

We want to make sure you get similar priority from those organisations which share Priority information with us, so we keep each other updated. However, if you do not wish for your information to be shared for this purpose, please let us know.

For more information about how we use your personal data in our register and to find out who to contact about your rights, please see our privacy notice at:

[wessexwater.co.uk/privacy-policy](https://wessexwater.co.uk/privacy-policy)

## What we promise to customers who are not satisfied with the extra help we provide

### Help to put things right

We want to make it easy for you to speak to us and let us know if you are not happy with the service provided. We have a simple three stage complaints procedure which tells you how you can make a complaint. We will listen to your issue and resolve it immediately. However, if we can't we'll aim to respond to you within five working days.

If we fail to meet these standards, we'll automatically pay you compensation where we can. You can also use our straightforward complaints procedure to speak to us and we'll make sure to put things right.

Find more information at [wessexwater.co.uk/complaints](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/complaints)

### Our Promises

We want to give you the best service possible and ensure our interactions are always polite and respectful. While our industry has certain standards we must follow, we aim to exceed them by offering one of the best guarantees around. Our promise outlines the length of time we'll take to respond to contacts and incidents, and how much compensation we'll pay if we fail to meet these promises.

To find our more visit:

[wessexwater.co.uk/promises](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/promises) or contact us for more information.

Complaints		Find out more →	
		Compensation if we fail to keep our Promise	How we'll pay you
Complaints	We will aim to respond to all complaints within five working days. If we fail to respond to a complaint within 10 working days you will receive compensation. We'll respond to a complaint within 10 working days.	<b>£40</b>	Automatic payment
* Payment will be made within 10 working days. If we fail to make a payment within this time we will automatically pay you a penalty payment of £40.			
Alternative supplies of water			
Alternative supplies of water	If your supply is interrupted for more than five hours, we'll make alternative supplies available.	<b>£25</b>	Claim
Priority services			
Registering	We will register you for Priority Services within five working days when you contact us.	<b>£25</b>	Claim
Our commitments	We'll compensate you if you have asked us to do the following and we don't: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• send you a bill in a particular format, eg, braille, large print or other languages.</li> <li>• communicate with you in your preferred way.</li> <li>• send an item of literature in the format you choose.</li> </ul>	<b>£25</b>	Claim



## Our promise for customers who are not satisfied with the provision of extra help (continued)

Internal sewer flooding		We'll respond to you within	Compensation if we fail to keep our Promise	How we'll pay you
Compensation	If your property is flooded internally with sewage from a public sewer.*	-	Equivalent to annual sewerage charges up to £2,000 per incident (or £300, whichever is greater)	
	If your property is flooded again internally with sewage from the public sewer within 12 months of the first incident.		<b>Second incident:</b> Equivalent to annual sewerage charges up to £2,500 (or £400, whichever is greater) <b>Third incident:</b> Equivalent to annual sewerage charges up to £3,000 (or £500 whichever is greater)***.	
Response times	We'll aim to respond within two hours.	-	-	-
Clean up	We'll aim to provide a free clean up service within 12 hours.	-	-	-
Further contact from us	We'll write to you with your compensation payment. Where required we'll inform you of the action we intend to take and any investigations we intend to make.*	Aim within five working days	-	-
	We'll update you on our investigation into the incident and the next steps we will take.	Aim within one month	-	-
<p>* Compensation payments for internal sewage flooding do not apply if the flooding was caused by your actions or any defect, blockage or inadequacy of private drains or sewers.                      ** Payment will be made within 20 working days. If we fail to make a payment within this time we will automatically pay you a penalty payment of £40.                      *** Each time your property is flooded again internally with sewage from the public sewer within 12 months of the first incident, the minimum payment will increase by £100 and the maximum payment will increase by £500.</p>				
External sewer flooding		We'll respond to you within	Compensation if we fail to keep our Promise	How we'll pay you
Compensation	If your property is flooded externally with sewage from a public sewer.*	-	50% of annual sewerage charges up to £1,000 per incident (or £150, whichever is greater)	
	If your property is flooded again externally with sewage from the public sewer within 12 months of the first incident.		<b>Second incident:</b> Equivalent to annual sewerage charges up to £1,250 (or £200, whichever is greater) <b>Third incident:</b> Equivalent to annual sewerage charges up to £1,500 (or £250, whichever is greater)***	
Response times	We'll aim to respond within four hours.	-	-	-
Clean up	We'll aim to provide a free clean up service within 24 hours.	-	-	-
<p>* Compensation payments for external sewage flooding do not apply unless it is a repeat inadequate capacity issue we're aware of, or the flooding was caused by your actions or any defect, blockage or inadequacy of private drains or sewers.                      ** Where we are not able to identify customers who have experienced external sewer flooding, the customer can contact us to claim payment themselves. Where you need to claim a payment for external sewer flooding, we'll make that payment within 10 working days of your claim. If we fail to do that, you are entitled to claim a penalty payment of £40.                      *** Each time your property is flooded again externally with sewage from the public sewer within 12 months of the first incident, the minimum payment will increase by £50 and the maximum payment will increase by £250</p>				

You can find further information about our Promise here [wessexwater.co.uk/promises](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/promises)

# Case Studies

## Meet Eileen and Susan

**Eileen's Story:** Eileen is one of the many customers we've helped with their water bills. She offered to share her experience to inspire others in similar situations. Today, Eileen is free from water debt and managing her bills much better. As a single parent of four and a widow for 16 years, Eileen faced the tough task of balancing work and raising her children alone. She found herself in debt and sought independent advice before applying for help with her water bill.

We placed Eileen on a reduced bill through our Assist tariff, tailored to what she could afford. Additionally, we helped her clear her debt through our Restart scheme. Eileen paid a set amount for two years, after which we cleared her remaining water debt. Now, Eileen is debt-free and able to manage her water bill. When asked if she would recommend Wessex Water to friends and family struggling with their bills, Eileen responded: "Yes, and I already have! It made a big difference and helped me so much when I was struggling. If it makes things easier for them, then I can't see why they wouldn't."

**Susan's Story:** We met Susan during a visit to a renal unit at a local hospital, in collaboration with Kidney Care UK, as part of a drop-in session. Susan was struggling with her bills and, due to her ill health, couldn't contact us for help. Susan is now registered for Priority Services and pays directly from her benefits towards her bill, which includes our discount for low-income pensioners. We've also enrolled her in our Restart scheme to help her become debt-free. Susan agreed to let us film her story with Kidney Care UK earlier this year to demonstrate how we can assist others in similar situations.

Listen to Eileen's story in her own words



Listen to Susan's story in her own words



# Case Studies

## Supporting customers in person

We have launched new regular day-time drop-in sessions at locations right across our region to give you the chance to speak with a customer adviser face to face.



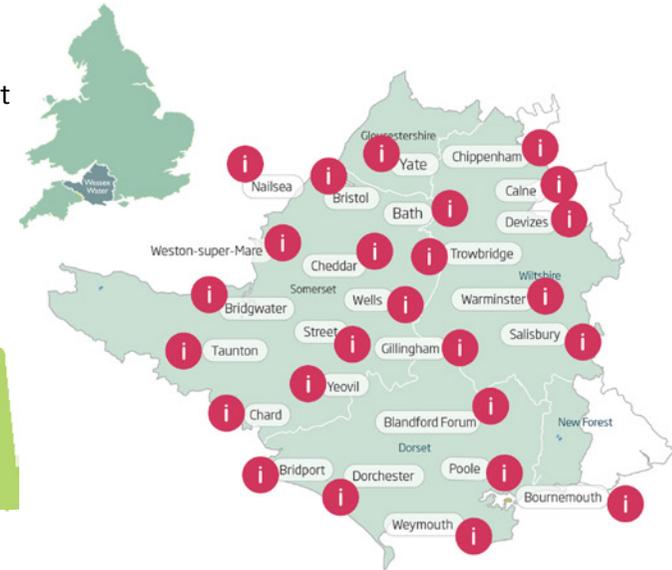
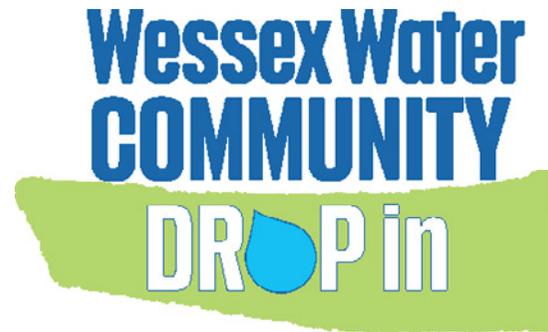
They can:

- answer any questions about your bill
- refer you for support if you are struggling to pay your bill
- provide advice on saving water and avoiding sewer blockages
- answer questions about water quality, plumbing and drainage.

You can book online for a dedicated time to meet an adviser or simply drop in during the open session times. We also work with a wide range of existing support organisations who can refer customers to us for additional advice.

### Locations

The locations we will be holding our sessions at are pinned on the following map:



Find out more about how our service works in the video below, and find your nearest drop-in location on our website at: [wessexwater.co.uk/community-drop-ins](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/community-drop-ins)



## Core customer information

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Our core customer information covers key aspects of what we do. It includes details about the services we offer, our complaints procedure and help with water leaks. More information can be found at [wessexwater.co.uk/info](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/info) or contact us for a leaflet.

## Contact us

---

### Questions about your bill or Priority Services?

Call 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm; Saturday, 9am to 1pm)

Live Chat [wessexwater.co.uk](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk)

Email Submit an online enquiry [wessexwater.co.uk/contact-us](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/contact-us)

Write Wessex Water, 1 Clevedon Walk, Nailsea, Bristol, BS48 1WA

### Questions about your water supply\* and/or sewerage service?

Call 0345 600 4 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, emergencies only at other times)

Live chat [wessexwater.co.uk](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk)

Email Submit an online enquiry [wessexwater.co.uk/contact-us](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/contact-us)

Write Wessex Water, Operations Centre, Claverton Down, Bath, BA2 7WW

We are happy to accept calls via **Text Relay UK** and **SignLive**.

Additionally, we can arrange for a translator to assist with your spoken language.

Calls to 0345 numbers from UK landlines cost no more than calls to standard UK landline numbers. If you're calling from a mobile please check with your service provider as sometimes calls can cost more. We may record telephone calls into our contact centres for quality, security and training purposes.





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