Code of Practice

This Code sets out your statutory rights relating to the services that we supply to you. It explains the standards of service which we aim to achieve, who to contact for advice and how to report a problem.

July 2026

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Introduction

1. Albion Eco Limited ("Albion", "we", "our" or "us") aims to provide you with a high-quality service and has produced this Code of Practice to explain our approach giving you, our customers, an overview of how and when we will interact with you and offer guidance to you on how to seek our advice and assistance.

2. This Code is for both household and non-household customers ("you" or "your"), including those living in mixed use buildings, and sets out your statutory rights regarding the services we supply to you. It explains the standards of service which we aim to achieve and who to contact if you have any problems. Where there is any difference in service standards between domestic and commercial customers these are clearly highlighted. Each service we offer is separately described in the following pages including details of the service standards applicable, so that you can identify the performance you can expect from us for the service(s) you receive.

3. This Code also contains appendices explaining the measures in place for dealing with debt, and our procedures for dealing with complaints, including who you can contact if you remain dissatisfied after we have attempted to resolve your complaint.

4. This Code is kept under review to accommodate, where possible, comments from customers and other interested parties.

5. Nothing in this Code affects your rights under law and it does not form a contract between you and us.

6. If you need to contact us in an emergency, please use the following telephone number:
01582 344374

Our main contact number and the customer service helpline is:
01582 344374

If you would prefer to contact us by e-mail, please use:
customerservices@albioneco.co.uk

However you choose to contact us, one of our customer service team will respond promptly and effectively to your concerns.

David Knaggs

Managing Director, Albion Eco Limited

Section 1 Albion Eco Limited - Your Water Services Company

1.1 Ownership

Albion is licensed to provide water and/or wastewater services to sites within England and Wales. We are wholly owned by Waterlevel Limited.

1.2 Services Provided

Our water services provision to you could include one or more of the following:

- Potable Water - water that is safe to drink and is regulated by the Drinking Water Inspectorate.
- Non-Potable Water - water collected, treated and delivered to properties for uses other than drinking, food preparation or washing. This is also referred to as 'Green Water' or 'Recycled Water'.
- Sewerage Services - which is the collection, treatment and safe disposal of wastewater and rainwater.

1.3 Current Operations

We provide water and water recycling services to business customers in Wales. Our aim is to provide innovative and resilient solutions to businesses and to help address growing sustainability and environmental challenges facing the water industry and society.

1.4 Relevance

This code is intended for all household and non-household customers where we are the appointed service(s) provider. If you are in receipt of a water or sewerage bill or a new customer pack from us, then your home or, in the case of landlords and non-household customers, your property falls within our appointed area of operations.

1.5 Tailored Services

This Code details all of our water and sewage services however, depending on the location of your property, you may not receive all of the services detailed in section 1.2 above.

You can confirm the services that we deliver to your property by either viewing your welcome letter or your last bill or by calling our customer helpline.

1.6 Water Services from a Regional Undertaker

Customers may receive a water or sewerage service from a regional provider who remains your primary contact point for the service that they provide (their contact details can be found on their bill).

1.7 Contact details

Emergency Helpline	**01582 344374**
Customer Service Helpline	**01582 344374**

Our Customer Service Helpline is open Monday to Friday from 8:30am until 5:30pm.

Contacting us in writing
If you want to write to us about any customer service or billing issue, please use the following address:

Albion Eco Ltd, Customer Services, Harpenden Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1TE

Email
To contact us by email please use the following address: customerservices@albioneco.co.uk

Albion on-line
Our website – www.albioneco.co.uk - contains customer information and details if you wish to contact us online.

Registered Office:
C/- Sable International, 5th Floor, 18 St Swithin's Lane, London, England, EC4N 8AD

Section 2 The Regulatory Framework

2.1 Background

We were appointed by the Water Services Regulation Authority to supply water services to specified geographical areas, one of which covers your property (detailed maps are available on request). Along with all other statutory undertakers we have to comply with the terms of a Licence. This sets out the rules that we must follow in providing our services, along with how we must behave towards you and the various regulators who monitor compliance with our legal obligations - obligations we are committed to meeting. The roles of the regulators are summarised below, along with their contact details.

2.2 The Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)

Ofwat was set up by the Secretary of State for the Environment, and for Wales. One of its main duties is to protect the interests of customers of all water and sewerage companies (known as undertakers) in accordance with legislative provisions and the Licences issued to them. It does this by:

- Imposing strict principles that guide our charging schemes.
- Ensuring that our customers are no worse off than those in the neighbouring area.
- Monitoring our capital investment to improve our services.
- Establishing the levels of services which we must provide.
- Laying down requirements about the information that we must give to our customers.

Contact details:

Address: Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham, B5 4UA
Telephone: 0121 644 7500
Website: Ofwat - Submit an Enquiry

2.3 CCW – The voice for water consumers

CCW is an independent body, established in 2005, to represent consumer interests. It has 2 committees, one in England and one in Wales, the Chairs of which represent the regions on the CCW Board.

CCW has a legal duty to keep under review matters affecting the interests of customers or potential customers of their allocated companies and to investigate complaints. You may refer a complaint to CCW at any time, but usually it will not begin its own investigations until we have had the opportunity to resolve it.

Contact details:

Address:	23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham, B2 4BH
Telephone:	0300 034 2222 (England)
	0300 034 3333 (Wales)
Website:	CCW - Online form
Office hours:	Mon to Fri 08:30 to 17:00

2.4 The Environment Agency (EA)

The Environment Agency regulates the amount of water that undertakers can take from groundwater, rivers and other inland waters and sets standards for the condition of the wastewater returned to rivers or the sea after treatment. The Environment Agency operates in England.

Contact details:

Address:	National Customer Contact Centre, PO Box 544, Rotherham, S60 1BY
Telephone:	03708 506 506
e-mail:	enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

2.5 Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Natural Resources Wales regulates the amount of water that undertakers can take from groundwater, rivers and other inland waters and sets standards for the condition of the wastewater returned to rivers or the sea after treatment. Natural Resources Wales operates in Wales.

Contact details:

Telephone:	0300 065 3000
e-mail:	enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
Website:	NRW - Get in touch

2.7. The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)

The Drinking Water Inspectorate checks that the drinking water we supply is safe and meets statutory water quality standards. To achieve this, it monitors our drinking water quality testing procedures, our approach to water source risk management and investigates our ability to manage operational incidents.

Contact details:

Telephone:	0330 041 6501
e-mail:	dwi.enquiries@defra.gov.uk

Website: Contact the Drinking Water Inspectorate team - GOV.UK

2.8. Your Local Authority

Your local authority's Environmental Health Officer monitors public health in the community along with the district health authority. We will keep these organisations informed about water quality issues arising.

2.9. Our Promise

Albion Eco was incorporated in 2011 and operates NAVs in Wales as part of the Waterlevel group. We have supplied over 121 billion litres of water to our customers, without a break in service. We are committed to the delivery of high-quality services, using techniques and processes which minimise the impact of our activities on the environment. We aim to do more than simply meet the legal standards set by Government for the industry, by consistently outperforming the existing water companies. Our board and that of our parent company have access to a wide range of industry expertise in order to advise it on all aspects of its business and customer services.

Section 3 Our Water Supply Service

3.1 Potable Water Supply

This section is only applicable to customers receiving a water supply from us. You can confirm the service(s) that we deliver to your property by either viewing your welcome letter or your latest bill.

3.1.1 Water Quality

The quality of water supplied for domestic purposes is controlled by the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2018, which are set by the Welsh Ministers.

These regulations are enforced by the DWI who, in the event of an incident, will investigate and, if appropriate, prosecute. When there is no danger to public safety, they may agree a period of time over which improvements must be made. We carry out regular drinking water quality tests. Samples are collected at random within the supply network and these are analysed to check for compliance. We may need to take a sample from your property. Wherever possible prior notice would be given but in an emergency this might not be feasible. A copy of our water quality records is available online or on request and these will be posted to you within 10 working days. If there is a serious problem a member of our team will contact you as soon as possible.

3.1.2 Water Hardness

Water hardness varies between geographic regions in relation to the proportions of naturally occurring calcium and magnesium salts. Water containing a low proportion of salts is defined as soft water and hard water contains a greater quantity of salts. Both hard and soft waters, treated to wholesome standards, are safe to drink. To find out more information about your water please visit our website (www.albioneco.co.uk/guidance/drinking/) or contact a member of the customer service team.

3.1.3 Water: Taste & Odour

Variations in water pressure and pipeline maintenance can occasionally affect the colour and flow of water. If you are concerned about an unusual or noticeable change in the taste or odour of your drinking water, please do not drink it and contact our customer service team immediately.

In the case of a failure of your water supply or if you have reason to believe that your drinking water is unsafe, please call us on our emergency 24-hour number: **01582 344374**. We will then arrange for a representative to come and visit your property. In order to reduce your security concerns, you can arrange for a password to be used when our representative visits your property, further information can be found in section 7 of this Code.

It may be necessary for us to arrange for an alternate supply of water to be made available to your property if our investigation is on-going. If water samples are sent for laboratory analysis, then we will normally provide you with written details within 5 working days of the results being available. If we suspect at any time that your water is unsafe for human consumption, you will be contacted immediately and, in this situation, we will advise you on what steps should be taken, e.g. boiling water. For customers who are on our Priority Services Register (please see section 6) we may make alternative arrangements to ensure you are provided with essential information.

If you are dissatisfied by our response to your problem or would prefer independent advice on a water issue in your home, you can contact your Environmental Health Officer at your local council who will be able to offer you further advice and support (contact details are included in your Charges Scheme).

3.1.4 Water: Discolouration

Discolouration of water can be alarming although it is unlikely to present a health risk. It is normally due to alterations in the flow rate within the pipework which results in a disturbance to accumulated sediments. The change in flow can be a consequence of numerous factors, for example a burst main. This problem can be simply resolved by running the main tap in your property (normally in the kitchen) until the water returns to its normal colour. The time the tap will need to be left running will depend on how efficiently it is removing the sediment from the pipe and may vary within different properties, however, it should not require more than 20 minutes to return to normal.

Occasionally a property may experience white water, this occurs when excessive air has entered the system and is similarly harmless. If you leave the water in a glass it will clear from the bottom of the glass upwards after a few minutes.

If you feel that these actions do not resolve the situation, or if the discolouration lasts for a few hours, please call our customers services team for further information and advice.

3.1.5 Plumbing Alterations

Alterations to internal or external plumbing must comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. These Regulations express the importance of 'safeguarding the water supply from contamination or wastage' taking into consideration the following issues: the type, arrangement, standard and maintenance of plumbing appliances and outside taps attached to the main water supply.

You and/or your landlord are responsible for the water supply pipework within the property you inhabit. The plumbing system and appliances should be in good working order and be properly maintained in accordance with regulations. Please note that we have the power of entry to inspect for breaches of Regulations. If you would like a copy of the Regulations, please contact our customer service team.

3.1.6 Water Quantity

Under the terms of our licence, we are expected to give you a continuous and steady supply of water, which is sufficient to meet your standard domestic requirements, these include;

- Washing
- Cooking
- Central heating
- Drinking
- Sanitation

We achieve this by managing and maintaining our network and resources efficiently and sustainably. Exceptional weather conditions may restrict the availability of resources and can lead to restrictions such as a Temporary Use Ban (TUB), formerly called a hosepipe ban, being introduced. If this occurs, relevant information will be communicated to our customers. We aim to keep disruptions due to drought to a minimum, matching the regional supplier or, for domestic customers: TUBs should not occur more frequently than once in 40 years; further restrictions should occur no more than once in 80 years; and standpipes should never be required.

Monitoring of the supply network enables us to identify unexpected fluctuations in flow and problems can therefore be highlighted quickly (for example pipework leakage). Remedial measures are taken with minimal delay, thereby protecting our customers and limiting damage.

3.1.7 Water Pressure - Potable

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

- height of the property above the water main,
- condition of your own pipes and fittings,
- number of properties being supplied with water from the same pipework,
- supply pipe leakage,
- periods of peak water demand and
- the quantity and type of water appliances being used.

Ofwat's guidance recommends that a minimum water pressure in the communication pipe of seven metres static head (0.7 bar) should be maintained.

During periods of high demand or if the property is too close to the level of the reservoir, then supply of this pressure may be unachievable, consequently if this problem exists you may be required to install a storage tank capable of holding 24 hours supply of water.

If you have a problem with your water pressure, first check the internal plumbing within your home, if you are still concerned, please call our customer service team.

3.1.8 Water Interruptions

We aim to provide a constant supply of water, but sometimes there might be interruptions. These can be caused by extreme weather conditions, burst mains, pumps or power supply failure. To maintain an efficient system, we may have to carry out work on our networks on various occasions during the year, this may disturb your water supply. For any planned network improvements, we will give you at least 48 hours' notice and we will restore your water by the time given within this notice. If there are major alterations to a network that could cause extensive interruptions to your supply, we will give you a two week notice period.

No advance notice can be given if we need to interrupt your water supply due to an unanticipated network emergency, for example a burst water main. We will aim to restore your water supply as soon as possible. If an interruption, resulting from our works, lasts more than five hours then we will supply an alternative source of water (e.g. bottled or bowser) and will inform you of how to obtain it. For our customers on the Priority Services Register we will make alternative arrangements to best suit the individual customer. If this could worsen an existing health condition, please contact our customer service team immediately.

3.2 Non-Potable Water Supply

Non-potable water (also known as recycled, green water or greywater) is not drinking water; it may have been through the process of use, collection and partial treatment and is then distributed for use. Treatment ensures that the non-potable water is a consistent quality, but it does not meet potable water standards. Non-potable water provides a sustainable resource, minimising energy consumption and producing lower emissions. It provides an alternative water source for some domestic, industrial, and environmental requirements.

Within your domestic property your non-potable supply will flow through pipes that are black with a green stripe, and which should be labelled as **"Not suitable for drinking"**. The only connections to this pipe will be WCs and an outside tap, marked with a permanent label stating **"Not suitable for drinking"**. On no account should you make additional plumbing connections unless adding a new WC. Industrial properties may have a non-potable supply for their processing purposes.

3.2.1 Is Non-Potable Water Safe?

Non-potable water has been treated to a standard appropriate for certain non-consumptive uses (e.g. toilet flushing, industrial usage and irrigation). It is NOT suitable for drinking. Pipework should be appropriately labelled. Due to the existence of different water quality networks on your site the public network has been protected by the installation of RPZs. We have a system that requires a Notification of Works prior to any modifications and a Certificate of Completion issued by an

approved plumber on completion of works to ensure the integrity of our networks. For more information, please contact the customer services team.

3.2.2 Costs

Non-potable water will be charged at a discount to potable water. Please refer to our Charges Scheme for your area.

3.2.3 Plumbing Alterations

Please refer to section 3.1.5.

We have the power of entry to inspect for breaches of Regulations and, due to the existence of different water services in your property, we must be satisfied that your plumbing is compliant. If you would like further independent advice, please contact the DWI.

3.2.4 Caring for Water

We are committed to improving the quality of our rivers and natural water ways, working with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Environment Agency (EA) to ensure we exceed expectations and deliver environmental benefits that enhance the local community for generations to come. Delivering non-potable water can offer a low cost, low environmental impact alternative to developing further potable water supply infrastructure.

The existence of our non-potable supply system provides greater security of supply during periods of drought. Despite the availability of non-potable water, we recommend that you think carefully about how you might save water, not just during drought conditions, but also day to day because every drop used has received treatment and pumping to get to your property.

Section 4 Connections, Pipework and Water Efficiency

4.1 Connecting Where There is no Water Main

If you have no water main near your property, or you require an additional supply connection, you can ask us to lay or extend a main; this is known as a 'Requisition'. We will charge you for providing the new main and any network alterations required. This can be paid as a single advance payment or by agreeing payments over a 12-year period. We are entitled to make a charge for providing the main and any necessary network alterations required, however we will take into consideration the income that will be received as a result of the newly connected pipe. If you have a dispute in regard to the requisition fee required, you can contact Ofwat for advice; their details are provided in section 2.

4.2 Additional Charges for New Properties

An infrastructure charge may also be applicable for connection to a new property; this cost covers the need for the improvements to the distribution network to meet the demand created by the new connection over time. We have the right to charge for any additional costs which may be incurred when the property is connected to a water supply for the first time. Details of our charging methodology can be provided by our customer services team.

4.3 Viewing Water Main Maps

You can inspect water main maps for the areas that we supply free of charge by arranging an appointment at our head office or local office. This can be arranged by ringing the customer service team.

4.4 Timescales for Connection to the Water Main

The timescale of a new connection will be dependent on the following factors which will be assessed during the initial requisition:

- Age of the property
- Type of connection required (separating an existing or creating a new supply)
- Distance from the main
- Size of house
- Amount of water required for the property
- Amount of addition network alterations which have to be performed
- The exact time frame cannot be given until the design has been agreed

Once our requirements are met, we will make a mains connection within 14 working days.

4.5 Self-Lay

The self-lay process includes the laying and connecting of a water main to a supply pipe and can be performed by an accredited contractor. More information on accredited self-lay organisations can be found on Ofwat's website (see section 2 for contact details).

4.6 Responsibility for Your Pipework

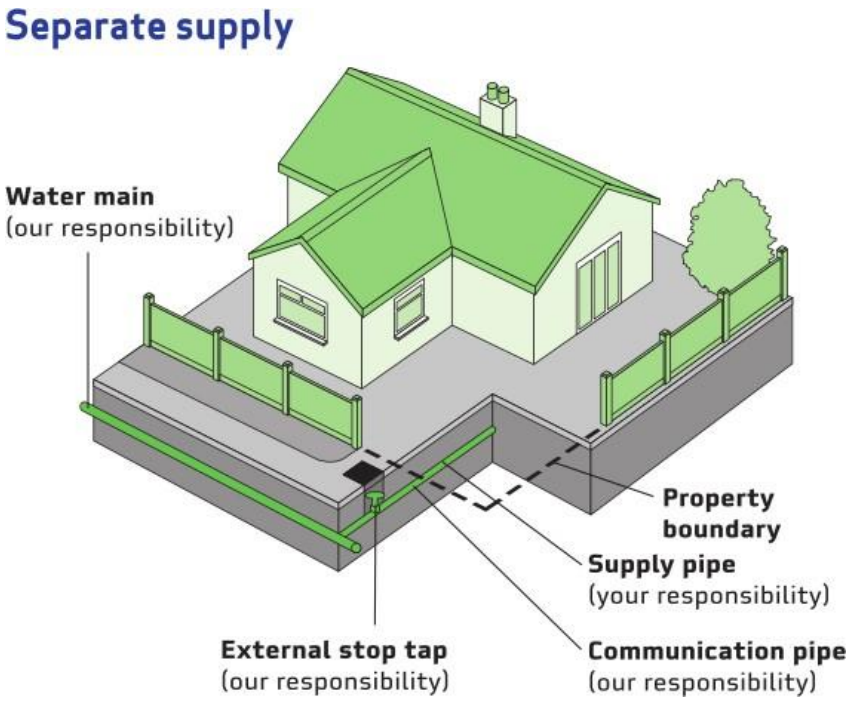
We are normally responsible for the potable water main and non-potable main in the road and leading to the boundary of your property. If a meter(s) is present, we own and maintain this, but you may be responsible for damage to these devices, howsoever caused.

4.7 Separate Supply

You or your landlord is responsible for the following potable and non-potable pipes (the general arrangement of these can be seen in the diagram below):

- Water supply pipe which runs from the boundary of your property into your property.
- Any water supply pipes within the boundary of your property.

- Any pipes within your property.



4.8 Shared Supplies

Modern houses are fitted with dedicated water supply pipework which, as stated above, is your responsibility. Older properties may be connected by a shared supply pipe, these private common supply pipes are your responsibility. If you have any questions about a shared supply, please contact our customer service team.

4.9 Information on Pipework Leaks

Leaks from your water supply pipe can sometimes be detected by an unexpected increase in your regular meter readings, or your meter recording usage when no water appliances are turned on or following the appearance of boggy ground or lush vegetation even during dry weather. We will monitor usage and check local pipe condition when meters are installed but ask you to remain vigilant and advise us if leakage is suspected.

Our emergency contact number (**01582 344374**) is available 24 hours a day. Any urgent problems or concerns should be reported via this number as soon as possible. If a leak occurs on the business owner's supply pipe, the business owner will be responsible for repairing the pipework. You can find an approved plumber on WaterSafe | Local Approved Plumbers or WIAPS - Find an Installer. If you fail to take remedial action within a certain period of time, we may perform the repairs and charge you for the work (subject to 14 days' notice) unless you have a reasonable explanation for the delay. The period of time in which we will not intervene is dependent upon the reason, type and the degree of damage to the pipe and/or the personal circumstances of the occupant.

In exceptional circumstances (for example, if there is imminent danger of damage, misuse or water contamination), under section 75 of the Water Industry Act, Albion has the power to disconnect

the water supply without notice. Notification of the steps to re-connect the property would be served on the occupier.

Allowances for water volumetric charges for non-household sites will only be given where the leak was Albion's responsibility. Non household properties may be entitled to a sewerage allowance on the first leak where water lost due to leakage has not returned to the sewer. If we do not provide your sewerage service, you will need to contact your sewerage company to start the claim for the allowance and we will provide them with the information they will need to calculate any allowance (subject to their own process).

Allowances must be applied for within 6 months of a leak being repaired. No allowances will be given if the leak has been caused through the carelessness of the customer or someone acting on behalf of the customer.

For more information, or to make a claim for a leakage allowance contact us on **01582 344374.**

4.10 Preventing Burst or Leaking Pipes

To prevent or minimise the damage caused by a burst pipe please:

- Identify where your main stop valves are located and keep them accessible, this will enable you to stop the water supply to your property immediately. The potable and non-potable supply valves are usually located under the sink or in the garage (wherever the mains enter the property). If you are having trouble locating the main stop valves you can ring our customer service team for further information.
- Maintain disused rooms at a temperature above freezing point in order to minimise the risk of burst pipes or leaking taps.
- Ensure that water pipes and tanks are properly insulated; this will reduce wasted energy.
- Repair dripping taps and faulty washers.
- If the property is going to be uninhabited during a cold spell of weather, leave the central heating system on low level to prevent pipes from freezing (many modern systems will have a freeze activation setting).
- Ensure the use of an accredited, reputable plumber (WIAPS or WaterSafe registered).

4.11 Water Efficiency

As a company which prides itself on sustainable development within the water industry, we support initiatives to conserve water, and we encourage and will help you to do the same. We aim to do this by:

- Enhancing our efficiency in regard to leakages, please notify us if you identify any problems with your systems, for example low pressure within the taps as this could be the result of an unrepaired burst main.
- Promoting the use of water efficient appliances, facilities, and practices in both the home and the garden.
- Operating water recycling schemes to minimise potable water use for business and in homes and gardens.

Further details on water efficiency are included in our Water Resource Management Plan and the Drought Plan for your area. These can be accessed via our website or by calling our customer

services team.

4.12 Water Meter Information

Where we install a supply meter to your property, we aim to read it at least once a year to provide evidence of water supplied and therefore to raise accurate bills. If we fail to do this, we will compensate you, providing access was not restricted or denied, for further information see Section 11. During periods of time when we do not read your meter, we will estimate your bill using your average consumption or other proxy. If you receive an estimated bill that you feel is incorrect then please contact our customer service team. You can inform the customer service team of your correct meter reading, and we will then send you a revised bill. For any other billing enquiries please contact the customer service team.

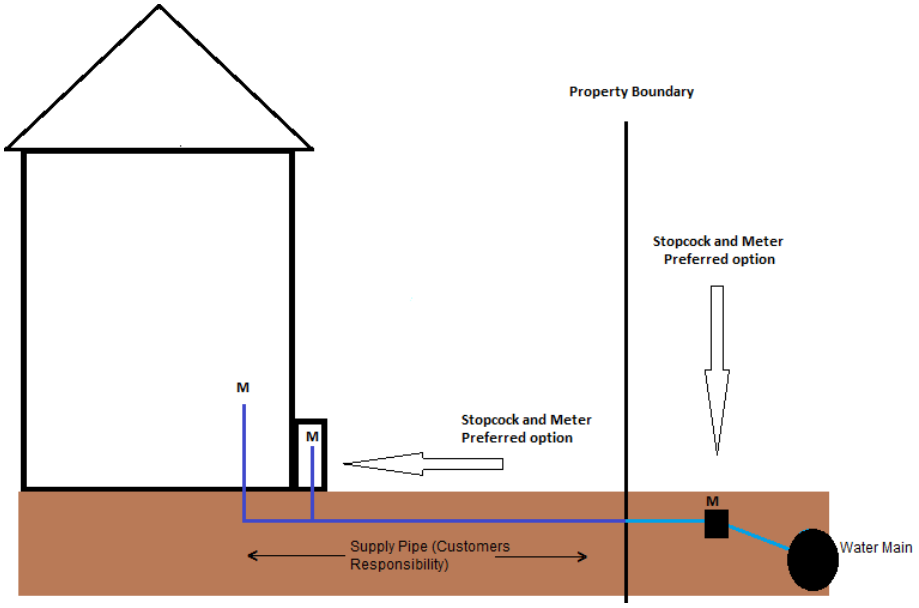
All occupants with a meter should note that, the meter belongs to us irrespective of its location; therefore, to detach, interfere or otherwise tamper with it is a criminal offence.

4.13 Location of Your Meter(s)

In accordance with Government regulations there are three potential locations for a meter:

- External – at our stopcock just outside the boundary of your property
- External – inside the boundary of your property (either in your garden or on the outside wall of your property).
- Internal

For ease of access (for maintenance and reading) our preferred meter location is one of the external options. On some new developments planning restrictions may apply to outside wall boxes.

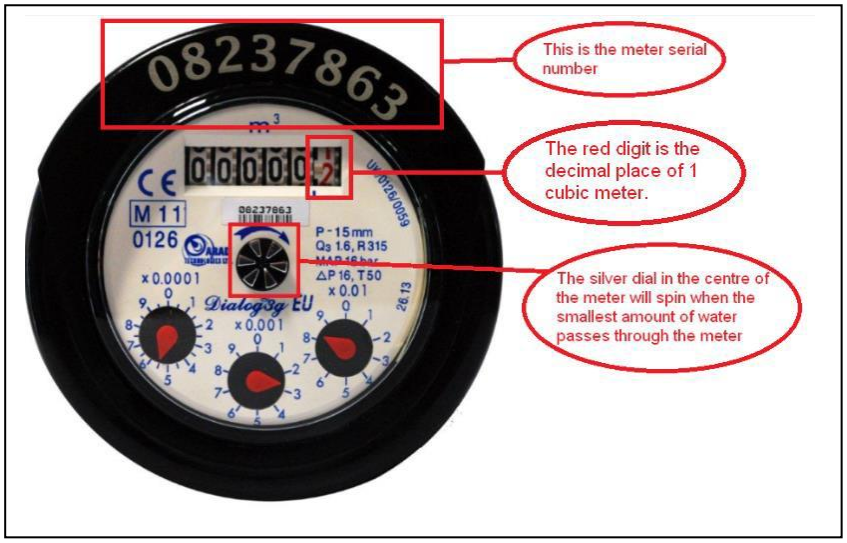


4.14 How to Read Your Meter?

Most of the properties in our area will have been fitted with a meter for both potable and non-potable water. In some cases, we may wish to install a meter on an existing unmetered property. There are a number of reasons why we would choose to install a water meter, these include to:

- raise accurate charges
- introduce demand management techniques
- provide a baseline to help guide sustainable development in both water and sewage services
- constrain the need to build expensive new reservoirs or boreholes
- meet our commitment to monitor the effectiveness of supply metering and consider the costs and benefits of alternative approaches to manage water consumption.

The meter reading is normally automatically generated, but these and older meters require occasional manual checks. If you are providing a reading to us, we only require the digits in black (an example is shown below). If you have any further queries or require any additional assistance please contact our customer service team.



4.15 Movement of the Meter

If you request a relocation of the water meter you will need to apply in writing, explaining why you require this course of action. If we consent to your application, we will provide you with relevant information and costs. If you are currently unable to read the meter due to particular personal circumstances, there will be no charge. However, if we refuse, we will write to you explaining why your proposal was not acceptable.

If you are having problems locating your meter, please contact our customer service team for advice on its location.

Please note that the position of the meter has no influence on the ownership of the pipe, you are responsible for pipes in your property and the service pipe running from your property to the boundary, irrespective of the meter location. If the meter is situated near our stopcock, it will register the entirety of leaks from your property boundary. This could consequently result in charges for the water wasted as a result of leaks in your service pipe.

If you suspect that your meter is faulty, please contact our customer service team. If your concern cannot be resolved by the customer service team, then you may request a meter test. The meter will be tested in its current location and if necessary, it will be removed and replaced within a

period of 40 days. If you disagree with the initial results, then you can request an independent analysis. If the test authenticates that the current meter reading falls within the error limits set in the Measuring Equipment (cold-water meters) Regulation 1988 you will consequently be liable for the cost of the test (up to a maximum £70 for domestic customers). If the meter is found to be over recording, charges will be adjusted accordingly either by the date that the meter became faulty or, if this isn't known, from six months prior to the date of the last reading recorded by us. Conversely if the meter is under recording, charges will NOT be backdated. A copy of the meter test report will be forwarded to you as soon as it is available.

4.16 Requesting a Meter for an Unmetered Property

We are able to fit a free meter in unmetered properties so that our charges are based on actual water used in addition to your fixed charge. If, however, you opt for a free meter and then decide you want to return to an unmetered charge you must request this within your first year of having a meter or within one month of receiving your second bill (whichever is later). Subsequent occupiers will not have the option to revert to an assessed charge and will be charged on a metered basis.

If you are renting a property, you may still be able to arrange for a meter to be fitted, however it is recommended that you seek your landlord's permission prior to the request. If you have fixed tenure of less than six months you MUST ask the landlord's permission; if you have a fixed tenancy of longer than six months your landlord cannot stop you from having a meter. The terms of your tenancy agreement should be taken into consideration as you may need consent to alter or improve the property. For more information, please contact CCW or Ofwat, their details are in section 2 of this Code of Practice.

4.17 Compulsory Water Metering

Over the last 50 years water demand per person has doubled in the UK. We are committed to working towards sustainable development in every aspect of our performance. Therefore, it is essential to raise awareness of supply and demand balance issues. There are specific circumstances, in which we have a legal right to fit a compulsory meter at a domestic property, these are:

- All new properties built after 1989
- Properties where swimming pools, sprinklers, power showers and high water usage equipment is operational
- Properties where there is a change in occupation

It is our policy to fit a meter into properties where there is water intensive equipment in use, as assessed water charges do not cover exceptional usage. If we identify a property using such equipment which has not been registered with us, we may issue back dated invoices. If you require further information, please contact our customer service team.

4.18 Why Would a Meter Installation Request be Rejected and What Would Happen Instead?

It may not be possible for us to fit a meter if the following applies to your property:

- If there is a supplementary supply of water to the property (more than one)
- Your property is on a shared supply

- The pipework inside your property is inaccessible, obstructed or in a poor condition
- If the meter could not be situated in an appropriate position, neither internally nor externally (potential positions are set out in Section 4.13)
- You live within a flat whereby you share facilities, such as hot water supply

In these circumstances we will issue bills based on an assessed charge, please contact our customer service team for further information.

4.19 Replacing Lead Pipes

New pipework is not made of lead, however it is possible that an old property linked to our system may have lead pipework. Contamination from lead pipes can be dangerous to children and unborn babies. The responsibility for the pipework is addressed in 4.6 & 4.7. To help identify lead pipes, they are dark grey (underneath any paint) and are also soft, marking easily. If you believe you have lead pipework, please contact our customer service team who can provide advice.

4.20 Moving Home

In order for us to take meter readings, you must advise us at least two days before you leave your property (whether you are the owner or a tenant) or within two days of moving in so that a final reading can be arranged; failure to do so could result in continuing liability for payment (up to a maximum of 28 days).

4.21 Resale Order Law

If you buy water or sewerage services from another person or company instead of directly from us, you should enquire into the 'Water Resale Order'. This protects residents from being overcharged for either water or sewage or both services. If you have any queries or concerns about this please contact our customer service team in the first instance or, subsequently, CCW or Ofwat for more information.

Section 5 Sewerage and Sewage Disposal Service

The information within this section is only applicable to those to whom we supply our sewerage service.

We maintain a system of sewers which takes the wastewater from your property's connection to the public sewer for treatment and disposal. The system of pipes which carries the wastewater is called the sewerage system. Surface and highway drainage may or may not be connected to our system; please call our customer service team for further information.

We must provide and maintain an adequate sewerage system for our sewerage areas.

5.1 Storm and Surface Water Sewers, Foul Sewers and Combined Systems

The sewerage system in your area is likely to be of one of two types, either:

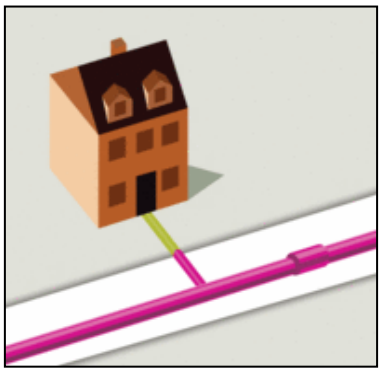
(a) a dual system in which storm and surface water drains to one sewer pipe and foul water from your property drains to a separate pipe; or
(b) a combined system where storm, surface water and foul water from your property drain to the same sewer pipe.

5.2 Responsibility for Pipework

The pipework which comprises the sewerage system in our area of operation can be categorised in three ways:

- a private drain
- a private sewer
- a public sewer

A private drain is a pipe which conveys foul or storm water from one property to a sewer or to the boundary of the property, whichever is the shorter distance.



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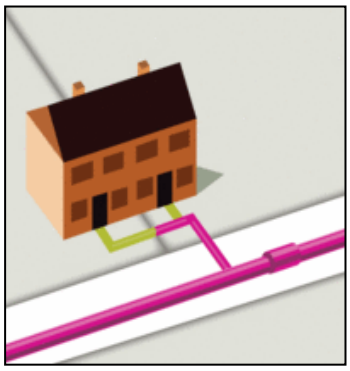

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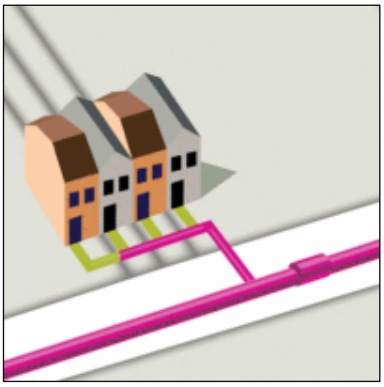

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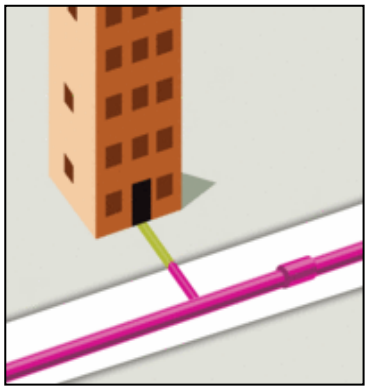

Flat or multiple dwelling

Public sewer/drain– responsibility of sewerage company

Privately owned– responsibility of property owner

Property boundary

A private sewer is a pipe which collects and conveys foul or storm water from several units in a multi-occupancy property (including communal grounds). A private sewer may connect to a public sewer, or a private sewage treatment works. Responsibility for a private sewer lies jointly with the owners of the properties which it serves.

A public sewer is one which has been vested in the Company and is shown as such on a statutory sewer map (many private sewers were adopted by water undertakers in October 2011 and may not yet be included in statutory maps). We are responsible for public sewers.

In most cases our sewers are situated in roads or public open places. Occasionally, however, our sewers may run through private land and gardens, in which case we have a right of access for maintenance and legal protection against you building over, or near, our sewer. Where we need to lay or maintain pipes in your land, we will observe clear rules for working in private land. A copy of these rules (the Code of Practice for Pipe-Laying) is available free of charge by phoning our customer service team. Ofwat has a duty to investigate complaints about our exercise of works powers on private land, unless it considers that we have not had sufficient opportunity to do so.

5.3 Protection Against Flooding from Public Sewers

Sewer flooding is unacceptable; we aim to provide adequate capacity in our sewers to protect homes from flooding. However, extreme weather will always create some flooding risk as it is not always financially feasible or environmentally sustainable to provide sewers of sufficient capacity to cope with any amount of rain. The aim of our capital investment programme is to protect homes against flooding from storms which are so severe that, on average, they put properties at risk of flooding once in 20 years. Flooding from sewers can also occur for other reasons, such as blockages.

If there is a sewer blockage or a pumping station breakdown which threatens to flood domestic premises, we aim to have a representative on site as quickly as possible and to start work within 8 hours. If you identify a problem with the sewerage system, please call our Emergency Helpline on **01582 344374**. If Albion becomes aware of a flood risk, we will attempt to contact occupiers who are likely to be affected by visiting their property.

If you are affected by sewer flooding call our Emergency Helpline. We will help with any clearing up necessary as a result of sewer flooding. We aim to complete a clear up within 12 hours for internal flooding and 24 hours for external flooding. The clear up can include pumping out, hosing down, litter picking, and cleaning floors and contaminated areas with disinfectant. If any damage has been caused, you will need to contact your insurance company. We are not liable for any damage caused by sewer flooding unless we have been negligent.

If you are not insured or your insurers decline to help, please contact our customer service team. We can arrange for a specialist contractor to assist.

If your home is flooded, you are entitled to a payment equal to your annual sewerage charges under our Guaranteed Standards Scheme, see Section 11. You may also be entitled to payment equal to 50% of your annual sewerage charge if you suffer external sewer flooding. Any dispute as to liability can be referred to Ofwat whose decision is final.

5.4 Statutory Sewer Maps

It is our duty to produce a map showing the location of every public sewer or disposal main which is vested in us, or which is likely to become vested. You have the right to inspect this map. If you would like to examine the map, please call our customer service team and we will advise you where the relevant map can be inspected.

If you would like us to provide you with information from the map rather than inspect it yourself, there may be a charge for this service (details of this can be found in your Charges Scheme).

5.5 Connection of Drains or Private Sewers to a Public Sewer

You are entitled to have your drain or private sewer connected to our public sewers, subject to certain practical requirements. Also, you will have to pay our expenses involved in making the connection.

You will need to supply us with details of the drain or private sewer to be connected and how the connection will be made. We will let you know within 21 days whether we can accept your proposals and what the costs will be. Albion can refuse permission if we consider that the mode of connection or the condition of the connecting pipe would damage our sewers. If you disagree with our decision the matter may be referred to Ofwat for determination.

You will have to pay:

(a) a charge for our inspecting the work or undertaking it ourselves.
(b) a contribution to our costs of providing the overall sewerage system. For further information on this charge contact our customer service team.

Once you have paid the inspection charges you must give us 14 days' notice of the day you, or your builder, propose to do the work so that we can inspect it to ensure that it meets our standards.

If Albion opts to make the connection to the sewer ourselves, any dispute about the costs we charge for making the connection may be referred to Ofwat for determination.

5.6 Requisitioning and Provision of Public Sewers

If you live in an area which is not served by a public sewer, you cannot demand that we provide one at our expense. However, if you and your neighbours - or your local authority - asks for a sewer to be provided we will provide one, but you and the other applicants - or your local authority - will have to pay any difference between the income we receive from charges for the disposal of wastewater to the sewer and our reasonable costs in providing the sewer in each of the following 12 years.

Alternatively, you can ask to pay for mains using the discounted aggregate deficit method, which is a single statutory commuted sum. The Water Industry Act 1991 states that this is an amount equal to the sum of the estimated relevant deficits for each of the 12 years following the provision of the main, in each case discounted to a net present value.

We will also want some security from you before doing the work. For our part, we must provide the sewer within 6 months of your agreeing that we do so. Unless you agree to an extension of time, if we break this deadline and you sustain loss or damage as a result, you may have a legal claim against us.

Any dispute in respect of the amount Albion requires you to pay; or the undertakings or securities we expect you to give; or any extension to the period of six months within which we must provide a public sewer; or the places at which private sewers or drains join the public sewer may be referred to Ofwat.

Under Section 101a of the Water Industry Act 1991 new public sewers can be requested to serve existing properties currently connected to private wastewater disposal facilities. This can only happen where the following criteria are met:

a) the properties must be domestic and built before 20 June 1995; and
b) two or more properties must be experiencing amenity or environmental problems, e.g. odour, flooding of land or property, pollution of watercourses; and
c) the problems must not be caused by inadequate maintenance of the existing private disposal system.

If a new sewer is provided, an individual householder would be responsible for payment of a sewerage infrastructure charge and sewer connection charge; installing and paying for a drain to connect their home to the new sewer; making safe any private disposal system no longer required; and paying sewerage charges to Albion once a connection has been made.

Section 6 Additional Services Available

We are committed to ensuring that access to customer information is available to all our customers and communication with customers, especially in an emergency, is made in an appropriate manner. There are no extra charges for any of these services.

6.1 Priority Services Register

Any of our customers can register information with us so that we can accommodate specific personal requirements. If you wish to register, please contact our customer service team.

Those of you who register with us can be reassured that we will not pass any information recorded on the register to anyone other than our employees or one of our partner companies working on our behalf. Furthermore, only those who need to know will have access to any information you provide.

6.2 Services Available

WARNINGS IN EMERGENCIES

Deaf or blind and visually impaired customers registered with us will be provided with warnings in emergencies in a manner appropriate to their individual circumstances.

BILLS

Registered customers may choose to use our bill reading service whereby we will telephone with details of a bill before we send it.

Registered customers may also choose to have bills sent to a friend or relative. If any problems with payment occur, we would contact the person nominated to discuss matters however we would not hold that person responsible for payment.

CUSTOMER INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

LARGE PRINT VERSIONS OF CUSTOMER LITERATURE ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

SECURITY

When you make an appointment with us to visit your home, you will be offered the opportunity of providing a password which the visitor, or any other member of the customer service team, will use to confirm that they are from Albion Eco Ltd. This scheme can also be extended to include all telephone communications.

In an emergency we may issue leaflets to you to explain our activities and to inform you of our presence; also giving our emergency telephone number for you to contact us to seek further information.

Section 7 Powers of Entry and Employee Identification

We have statutory rights of entry to your premises or land to investigate, take samples and to carry out surveys or work relating to the provision of our services. Except in an emergency, we will call at a reasonable time and, if exercising our statutory right of entry, we will give you appropriate notice (normally 7 days). If we have not given you that notice you have the right to refuse us entry.

7.1 Employee Identification

All of our employees who may need to visit you carry identification which they will show you before asking to be allowed into your home.

The identification card you will be shown carries the employee's photograph and hologram, name, Albion's logo, and a unique serial number. The employee will also carry a large print card giving their name and the **01582 344374** telephone number.

If you have any doubts concerning the person visiting you, do not let them into your home before you have clarified that they work for us, by telephoning **01582 344374**.

NB: Employees of our partner companies may not be carrying an Albion identity card but they should carry their own company's identity card and a statement confirming that they are representing us (on our headed paper).

Where we make an appointment to visit you, we can operate a password system. When we make the appointment on the telephone you will be asked whether you want to give us a password for our visiting employee to use so that you know the person who calls works for us.

If you have reason to doubt that a person calling on you does not work for us, **DO NOT LET THE INDIVIDUAL/S INTO YOUR PROPERTY**. No Albion employee will mind if you ask them to wait outside while you telephone our customer service helpline or emergency number (both of which can be found on your bill) to verify the caller is who they claim to be.

REMEMBER: NO CARD…NO ENTRY!

7.2 Online and social media

Our website is www.albioneco.co.uk. Our website contains advice and information on our services, and it is where we publish important customer documents and regulatory document. Our website is available in English and Welsh.

All emails from staff will be from an email address following this format: firstname.surname@albioneco.co.uk or firstname.surname@wlevel.co.uk (some contacts may come from our parent company Waterlevel).

We do not currently have any active social media accounts so please be wary of any contact from a social media account purporting to be Albion Eco.

If you have any concerns about a message you have received, please call us on 01582 344374.

Section 8 Charges, Bills and Accounts

Details of charges and tariffs for the current year; liability to pay charges; how we apply charges; and our miscellaneous charges are contained in our Charges Scheme for your area (this is available on request from our customer services team or can be found on our website).

The person(s) living in a property is legally responsible for payment of the water services. If you are a tenant who pays for water services through rental payments to a landlord, then you must provide the landlord's contact details so that payments can be requested directly from the landlord. Failure to provide such details may result in us taking debt recovery action against you.

8.1 Types of Charges

While there are a number of different tariffs covering water supply (potable and non-potable), recycled water and wastewater treatment and disposal, there are basically two types of charges for our services:

(a) metered charges if your water is supplied through a meter (including a fixed, or standing, charge and a volumetric charge); and
(b) unmetered charges if your water is not supplied through a meter - which are based on the old rateable value of a property or an assessment for more recent properties.

The chargeable rateable value of the property is:

(a) rated properties – the Rateable Value of the property
(b) unrated properties – where a property does not have a rateable value specifically assigned to it, and we have not exercised our rights under the Water Industry Act 1991 to charge by reference to volume, an assessed charge will be set
(c) where two or more separate properties with Rateable Value are merged to form one property (flats being converted back to one house for example) the chargeable Rateable Value of new single property will be the same as the combined Rateable Values of the previously existing properties.

Full details of charges and tariffs are contained in our Charges Scheme.

If you are paying unmetered charges, you can choose to have a meter installed and pay metered charges.

8.2 Paying Water Service Charges – Unmetered Properties

Unless a customer has agreed a different payment arrangement with the Company, unmetered charges are payable in two equal instalments, on 1st April and 1st October.

The Company offers regular payment plans for unmetered charges:

(a) the standard plan is for payment by 12 instalments, with payment being due on a set day of each month.
(b) Payment by a maximum of 10 instalments between April and January is also possible (if you ask to use this option after April, the charges due will be apportioned on a monthly basis so that they are settled by January). Payment is due on a set day of the month.
(c) If you need to pay more frequently, alternative plans may be available on request.

8.3 Metered Charges

The annual standing charge element of metered charges and the volumetric part are payable in arrears (based on meter readings) and, unless you have agreed a different payment arrangement with us, they are payable within 28 days of a bill being issued.

Metered bills are usually issued on or around 1 April (including the annual standing charge) and, thereafter, every six months (or quarterly in the case of some commercial properties) and on moving out. We aim to base every bill on meter readings, but estimates may need to be used on occasions. It is recommended that a meter reading is taken and sent to us when moving into or out of a property, otherwise closing or opening bills may include assessed usage.

We reserve the right to take meter readings and issue bills on a more regular basis.

We operate a special meter payment plan for metered customers. Under the plan you agree to pay a fixed amount each month. At the end of each year, we will review the account and make any adjustments to the required monthly payment if water use (on which discharge volumes are based) has changed and the amount being paid is too high or too low.

If the account is in credit, you can choose to have the over-payment refunded or carried forward to reduce next year's payments. If not enough has been paid, the debt will be added to the following year's bill and monthly payments re-set to repay the outstanding balance and that year's charges over the next 12 months. Alternative plans for paying metered charges, or repaying any arrears, are available on request.

Monthly or more frequent plans are available for re-paying any arrears of metered charges, or the assessed volume charge or any other tariff system.

8.4 Help with Metered Bills

The Government has decided that certain metered customers should receive help with their bills so that they do not reduce water use below the levels they need (the WaterSure scheme). To qualify for help, in addition to paying metered charges, you must also be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits (or have someone else living in your household in receipt of the benefit):

(a) Universal credit
(b) Housing benefit
(c) Income support
(d) Income-based jobseeker's allowance
(e) Income-based employment and support allowance
(f) Working tax credit
(g) The child tax credit (except families in receipt of the family element only)
(h) Pension credit

The person in receipt of the benefit must then have either:

(a) three or more dependent children under the age of 19 normally living with them; or
(b) be diagnosed as having one of the following medical conditions (or any member of the household has been diagnosed as having the condition):

- desquamation (flaky skin loss)

- weeping skin disease (eczema, psoriasis, varicose ulceration)
- incontinence
- Crohn's disease
- ulcerative colitis
- abdominal stomas
- renal failure requiring dialysis at home (unless your health authority provides financial assistance towards water used in the dialysis process) and, as a result of that condition, the person concerned is obliged to use a significant additional volume of water.

In addition to the groups set out above, we will consider requests for assistance from customers in receipt of benefit who have other medical conditions which involve significant extra use of water.

Proof of a relevant medical condition would be required, such as a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner which states:

- the name and address of the person with the illness,
- the illness which requires a significant extra amount of water to be used,
- the date on which the certificate is issued,
- the name and address of the registered medical practitioner.

You will have to pay any charge the medical practitioner makes for issuing such a certificate.

Where a person qualifies for help, they will pay an annual amount equivalent to the average household bill for water/sewerage/recycling in Albion's area (or their actual metered charges if these are lower).

Please see our charges scheme for your area for full details of charges and tariffs.

8.5 Agreeing a Payment Plan

To set up a payment plan please contact us so that we can discuss your requirements with you and agree a suitable plan.

We will always require a payment plan to be set at a level which clears the current year's charges by the end of the financial year (31 March) but if there are arrears on the account, we may be able to agree a longer period of time to clear these to make instalments more manageable.

8.6 Paying Charges

Payment can be made by:

(a) Internet banking (please use details provided on the back of your bill, remembering to include your unique customer reference number)
(b) Cheque (with your address and customer reference number written on the back) by post to: Customer Accounts, Albion Eco Ltd, Harpenden Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1TE (please do not send cash through the post)

Please refer to our charges scheme for your area for further information on charges and tariffs.

8.7 Financial Assistance

A restricted special assistance fund is available to help domestic customers who are trying to pay bills but who are having difficulties so doing for reasons of severe financial hardship or personal circumstances. If you believe that you require special assistance, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss eligibility and the various options that might be available to you.

8.8 Business customers

If you are a business customer and are unable to pay your bill, please contact us as soon as possible on **01582 344374**. We will advise you on how we can help.

If you fail to pay your bills, we may take further action which could include:

a) passing the debt to a debt collection agency
b) charging interest on the unpaid amounts (at the rate of 8% plus the Bank of England Base Rate)
c) stopping the supply of water to your premises

Section 9 Complaints procedure

Under Sections 29 and 33 of the Competition and Services (Utilities) Act 1992, we have produced a Complaints Procedure for dealing with complaints from customers or potential customers.

There are three levels for investigating and responding to complaints within the Procedure:

Level 1 - You will receive a response from an employee working in one of our complaints teams.
Level 2 - If you are dissatisfied with our first response, you can ask for a senior manager to review your complaint and the way we have handled it.
Level 3 - If you are still dissatisfied after having had a response from our Customer Service Representative and Senior Manager, you can ask CCW to investigate your complaint (the area office address is in Section 2).

The full Complaints Procedure appears in Appendix 2.

The Complaints Procedure explains how Albion will handle complaints. A summary of this will be sent with our first reply to a complaint.

Additional copies of the full Complaints Procedure may also be obtained free of charge from our customer service team.

Section 10 Referral to Ofwat for Determination

Under the Water Industry Act 1991 certain disputes between you and us can be referred to Ofwat for a binding decision (or 'determination'). These are:

10.1 Entitlement to a Free Meter

All new domestic properties in our area will, prior to occupation, be fitted with a meter(s) to record water usage. Section 144A of the Act allows customers of existing properties to require their water company to fix its charges to them by reference to the volume of water supplied. We are not obliged to do so if it is not reasonably practicable to do so or if it would incur unreasonable expense. Disputes relating to the provision of a meter can be referred to Ofwat for determination.

10.2 Connection to Water Mains

We have a duty (subject to certain conditions) to make a connection, where you serve notice to us requiring us, for the purposes of supplying water for domestic purposes, to connect a service pipe from your premises, with one of our mains.

The Act provides that we may recover from the person who has requested a connection the expenses reasonably incurred in making that connection. It also provides that any dispute about the financial conditions or whether the expenses were incurred reasonably may be referred by either party for determination by Ofwat.

10.3 Terms and Conditions for Disconnections, Reconnections and Non-Domestic Supplies

Ofwat may determine the reasonableness of a charge levied in respect of a connection to the main for non-domestic purposes where no provision is made in our charges scheme for charges in respect of such a supply. This determination must have regard to the desirability of Albion recovering the expenses incurred in providing the supply and securing a reasonable return on capital.

10.4 Requisitioning of a Water Main or Public Sewer

Any dispute in respect of the amount we require you to pay; or the undertakings or securities we expect you to give; or about extending the six months' time limit for us to provide a water main or sewer; or about where your water pipes join our mains or your private drain or sewer communicates with the public sewer, may be referred to Ofwat for determination.

10.5 Adoption of Water Mains, Sewers and Sewage Treatment Works

If we refuse to adopt a water main, sewer or sewage disposal works, or offer to adopt on terms which the person who constructed the sewer or works objects to, or we do not respond to an application within two months of receiving it, that person may refer the matter to Ofwat for determination.

An appeal to Ofwat for determination may also be made by the owner of any sewer or sewage

disposal works if she or he is aggrieved by our proposal to make a declaration under Section 102 of the Water Industry Act 1991 that the sewer or sewage treatment works becomes vested with us.

10.6 Connection of Drains to a Public Sewer

Any dispute as to whether:

(a) our refusal to permit a drain to be connected to a public sewer is reasonable; or
(b) a requirement by us that a drain or private sewer be laid open for inspection for the purpose of examining its mode of construction and condition is reasonable; or
(c) an estimate provided by us for making a connection which it has opted to make itself under Section 107 of the Act is reasonable; or
(d) any security required to be paid before we will make a connection which it has opted to make itself is reasonable; or
(e) any excess payment is repayable, or any additional expenses are recoverable after we have made a connection to the sewer, or the amount of any such excess or expenses, may be referred to the Ofwat for determination.

10.7 Requirement that a Proposed Drain or Sewer be Constructed so as to Form Part of the General Drainage System

Where we consider that a proposed drain or sewer is, or is likely to be, needed to form part of a general sewerage system and requires the person proposing to construct the drain or sewer to construct it in a manner differing from the manner in which that person proposes, she or he may appeal to Ofwat within 28 days of the Company making the requirement.

10.8 Alterations to the Drainage System of Premises

Any dispute arising from our serving notice on the owner of premises which drain to a public sewer or cesspool that at its expense it intends to close the existing drain and/or sewer or fill up the cesspool and provide a drain or sewer which effectively drains the premises to a public sewer may be referred to Ofwat for determination.

10.9 Closure and Prohibition of Use of a Public Sewer

If there is a dispute about the effectiveness of any sewer provided by us as an alternative for the use of a person who was lawfully using a public sewer prior to our discontinuing or prohibiting its use, the matter may be referred to Ofwat for determination.

10.10 Exercising Work Powers on Private Land

Any complaint about the exercise of our powers to carry out works in private land may be referred to Ofwat. Ofwat is empowered to direct us to make payment up to a maximum of £5,000 in respect of any failure to consult the complainant adequately about the exercise of its powers or the manner in which they are exercised, or any loss, damage or inconvenience unless compensation is recoverable under any other enactment.

However, if Ofwat believes that any such compensation fails to reflect the fact that it was not

reasonable for us to cause the complainant to sustain the loss or damage or to be subjected to the inconvenience he may direct us to make the payment in addition to the compensation.

Section 11 Our Guaranteed Service Standards

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme is a statutory scheme, which applies minimum performance standards to the regulated services of all water and sewerage companies. We guarantee to provide the following standards of service in our day-to-day dealings with you, subject to the exceptions specified.

If we fail to make any of the payments set out below in the stated time, we will automatically pay you a penalty payment of £20 (domestic customers) or £50 (business customers).

11.1 Keeping appointments

When we make an appointment with you in writing or by telephone, we will as a minimum tell you whether we will visit before or after 13:00, or you can ask for an appointment within a two-hour time-band. We will keep the appointment within the correct time-band. Wherever possible we will make an actual time appointment for which we will not be late by more than 30 minutes.

If we have to change any appointment, we will give you at least 24 hours' notice.

We are not required to make a payment if you cancel the appointment or if we cancel the appointment giving at least 24 hours' notice, nor if it is not feasible to keep the appointment due to:

(a) severe weather, or
(b) industrial action by our employees, or
(c) an act or default of a person other than our representative

The standard does not apply if our representative needs to visit your premises in an emergency. An emergency means that an issue must be resolved urgently, and therefore a visit must take place with less than 24 hours' notice, on a non-working day, or outside of our normal working hours (i.e. the morning and afternoon slots referenced above).

If we fail to achieve any of these standards, we will pay you £20 automatically within 10 working days, or credit the relevant amount to your account if it is in arrears.

11.2 Replying to correspondence

We will send you a substantive reply within 10 working days of receiving a written query about the correctness of your account. Similarly, we will send you a reply within 10 working days of receiving a written complaint about the supply of water or the provision of sewerage services.

We will notify you within 5 working days of receiving a written request to change the method by which you pay your account if we cannot meet the request.

We are not required to make a payment:

(a) if you inform us that you do not wish to pursue the query or request, or
(b) in the case of a query or complaint where the company reasonably considered a visit to be necessary, but severe weather made it not feasible to make the visit;
(c) if a substantive response is not made within the required period because of industrial action of our employees, or the act or default of a third party, or
(d) if the query, complaint or request was incorrectly addressed, or from the point at which the correspondence becomes frivolous or vexatious.

If we fail to achieve any of these standards, we will pay you £20 (domestic customers) or £50 (business customers) automatically within 10 working days, or credit the relevant amount to your account if it is in arrears.

11.3 Flooding from sewers – internal flooding

If we know that effluent has escaped from our sewers and entered the buildings of your property, or passed beneath a suspended floor, we will automatically make a payment equal to your annual sewerage charges for each incident of sewer flooding. We will make a minimum payment of £150 up to a maximum of £1,000 (per incident). We will make this payment within 20 working days, or we will automatically make a further payment of £20 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

We are not required to make a payment if:

(a) sewer flooding was caused by:
- exceptional weather conditions
- industrial action by our employees
- your actions
- a defect, inadequacy or blockage in your drains or sewers, or

(b) it is impractical for us to have identified you as being affected, and you did not make a claim within three months following the date of the effluent entering your property.

11.4 External flooding

Where you are materially affected by effluent escaping from our sewers and entering your land or property (including outbuildings), and you make a written claim (to the address in section 1) within three months of the incident, we will make a payment to you. We will pay a sum equal to 50% of the annual sewerage charge, subject to a minimum payment of £75 and a maximum payment of £500 in respect of each incident. We will make this payment within 20 working days of your claim, or we will automatically make a further payment of £20 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

We are not required to make a payment if:

(a) sewer flooding was caused by:
- exceptional weather conditions
- industrial action by our employees
- your actions
- a defect, inadequacy or blockage in your drains or sewers, or

(b) we have made a payment to you in respect of the same incident for internal flooding, or
(c) you were not materially affected by the incident (see below), or

(d) you have not claimed payment within three months following the date of external sewer flooding incident.

In deciding whether you have been materially affected by the incident, we will take into account:

(a) what parts of your land or property the effluent entered
(b) the duration of the flooding
(c) whether the flooding restricted the access to your land or property
(d) whether the flooding restricted the use of your land or property
(e) any other relevant considerations of which we are aware

11.5 Notice of interruption to supply

Where it is planned that the water supply will be materially interrupted or cut off for more than four hours to carry out necessary works, we will give written notice to affected customers at least 48 hours before the supply will be interrupted or cut off, including notification of the time by which the supply will be restored.

If we fail to do this, we will automatically make a GSS payment to the customer of £20 or £50 for business customers

Where the supply is interrupted or cut off to carry out necessary works in an emergency we will, as soon as is reasonably practicable, take all reasonable steps to notify affected customers:

• that the supply has been interrupted or cut off
• where any alternative supply can be obtained
• the time by which the supply will be restored; and
• the phone number of an office from which further information may be obtained.

There are certain circumstances in which we need not make a GSS payment if the correct notice of interruption to supply is not given. These are if:

(a) industrial action by our employees makes it unfeasible for us to give the correct notice at least 48 hours before the supply was cut off
(b) the act or default of a person other than our representative made it unfeasible for us to give the correct notice at least 48 hours before the supply was cut off; or
(c) it is impractical for us to have identified the particular customer as being affected, and the customer has not made a claim within three months of the date on which the supply was cut off.

If we fail to pay this within 10 working days, you can claim an additional £20 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

11.6 Supply not restored

We will automatically make a GSS payment of £30, or £75 for business customers, to all affected customers if:

(a) the supply is interrupted or cut off to carry out necessary works, and the supply is not restored by

the time stated in the written notice given to affected customers

(b) the supply is interrupted or cut off in an emergency due to a leak or burst in a strategic main and is not restored within 48 hours of us first becoming aware of the interruption or that the supply was cut off; or

(c) the supply is interrupted or cut off in an emergency for any other reason and is not restored within 12 hours of us first becoming aware of the interruption or that the supply was cut off.

A further automatic GSS payment of £60, or £150 for business customers must be made for each full 24-hour period that the supply is interrupted or cut off.

There are certain circumstances in which the company need not make a GSS payment if a supply is not duly restored. These are if:

(a) industrial action by the company's employees prevented the supply being restored
(b) the act or default of a person other than the company's representative prevented the supply being restored
(c) severe weather prevented the supply being restored
(d) where the supply was interrupted or cut off due to a leak or burst on a strategic main, or for any other unplanned reason, the circumstances were so exceptional that it would be unreasonable to expect the supply to be restored within the relevant period
(e) it is impractical for the company to have identified the particular customer as being affected, and the customer has not made a claim within three months of the date of the supply not being duly restored
(f) the regulation does not apply where supply is interrupted or cut off due to a drought.

If we fail to pay this within 10 working days you can claim an additional £20 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

11.7 Low water pressure

We will maintain a minimum pressure in a communication pipe serving your premises with water at 7 meters static head. At this pressure it should not take longer than 14 seconds to fill a 2-litre container. Where in any period of 28 days the pressure in a communication pipe falls below this level of pressure on 2 occasions lasting more than 1 hour we will, except in the circumstances described below, pay you (or credit your account) the sum of £25.

The exceptions described in this paragraph are:

(a) that a payment under this regulation has already been made to you in respect of the same financial year; or

(b) that it was impractical for us to have identified you as affected and that you have not made a claim for payment, either orally or in writing, under this guarantee within 3 months from the later date of the 2 occasions on which the pressure fell below 7 metres static head; or

(c) that industrial action by our employees or the act or default of a person other than an officer, employee or agent of Albion or a person acting on behalf of its agents made it impracticable to maintain the minimum pressure referred to in the first paragraph; or

(d) the pressure falls below the minimum standard due to necessary works taking place or due to a drought

(e) for non-potable water where an alternative site-specific minimum pressure is relevant.

11.8 Emergency Drought Orders

We will compensate you if your water supply is interrupted as a result of restrictions authorised by emergency drought orders (this includes water supplies for cooking, washing, drinking and flushing the toilet, but does not include uses such as watering the garden, car washing or filling a pool).

We will give household customers £10 per day or part day (up to the limit of last year's average household bill) and business customers £50 per day or part day (up to the limit of last year's water charges for the premises or £500 whichever is lower).

11.9 Restrictions on use

This guarantee applies where we issue you with a 'Restriction of Use Notice' after we have become aware of an actual water quality problem. Where this guarantee applies, we shall, except in the circumstances described below, pay to you (or credit your account) the sum of £30, each time it happens.

The circumstances in this paragraph are:

(a) that it was impractical for us to have identified you as affected and that you have not made a claim for payment, either orally or in writing, under this guarantee within 3 months from the date of the Restriction of Use Notice; or

(b) that it was necessary to issue the Restriction of Use Notice as a result of severe weather conditions, industrial action by our employees or the act or default of a person other than an officer, employee or agent of Albion or a person acting on behalf of its agents.

11.10 Working in the street

Except in emergencies, we will always try to carry out work in the street so that access to individual properties is not blocked. Where this cannot be avoided, we will agree with you in advance times when work will be carried out. If we do not keep to these times, we will pay you £10. We are not required to make a payment if we fail to meet this standard because of circumstances outside our reasonable control, e.g. exceptional weather conditions, strikes or actions of third parties.

11.11 Money paid in error

If we discover that over a period of time a customer has wrongly paid money for a service not provided (e.g. for sewerage services when a property is not connected to our sewers), we will refund all money paid in the 6 years before the mistake is discovered or the period during which we were appointed as undertaker, whichever the shorter, together with interest if the period in question is longer than 12 months.

11.12 Receipts

Where you request a receipt for cheques paid to us, we will pay you £10 if we do not despatch one within 5 working days of receipt. We are not required to make a payment if we fail to meet this standard because of circumstances outside our reasonable control, e.g. exceptional weather conditions, strikes or actions of third parties.

11.13 Court claims

If we make an error or omission which causes a Court Claim to be issued against you erroneously for non-payment of charges, we will pay you £100.

11.14 Access to private property

If we fail to consult over access to your private property where rights of access do not already exist, we will pay you £25.

11.15 Failure to take an annual meter reading

If we installed a meter or meters at your property and fail to base at least one water supply bill a year on an actual reading, we will pay you £10.

11.16 Exceptions

If you owe us money and the debt has been outstanding for more than six weeks at the time when a payment is due to you under this Scheme, any payment will normally be credited to your account. We will notify you in writing that we have done this.

Your legal rights to take action for any loss or damage suffered are not affected by payments under this Scheme. Payments do not constitute an admission of liability on our part.

Any dispute regarding your right to a payment may be referred to Ofwat for a binding determination.

Section 12 Useful Contact Details

Citizens Advice (CA)

Find your local Citizens Advice:	In the Contact us section www.citizensadvice.org.uk
National phone line:	0800 702 2020 (Wales)
	0800 144 8848 (England)

Customer Information Literature

We produce information on many aspects of our business. Copies of the information listed below are available on request and accessible on our website.

- Customer Code of Practice
- Regulatory Accounts
- Health & Safety Policy
- Contaminated land assessment guidance
- Drinking water quality

Appendix 2 - Complaints Procedure

INTRODUCTION

THIS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE PROVIDES INFORMATION ON:

- our definition of a complaint;
- arrangements for receiving, handling and registering complaints;
- compensation;
- arrangements for reviewing a case if you are dissatisfied with the way in which your complaints have been handled previously;
- monitoring and analysis of complaints; and
- confidentiality.

The Procedure is supported by staff training, documentation and appropriate contractual arrangements with third parties.

PROCEDURAL STEPS

Under Sections 29 and 33 of the Competition and Services (Utilities) Act 1992, we have produced a Complaints Procedure for dealing with complaints from customers or potential customers.

There are three levels for investigating and responding to complaints within the Procedure:

Level 1

You will receive a response from an employee working in one of our complaints teams.

Level 2

If you are dissatisfied with our first response, you can ask for a senior manager to review your complaint and the way we have handled it.

Level 3

If you are still dissatisfied after having had a response from our Customer Service Representatives and a Senior Manager, you can ask the independent CCW (address in section 19 below) to investigate your complaint.

The full Complaints Procedure follows, setting out how we will handle complaints, a summary of this will be sent along with our replies to complaints.

COMPLAINTS

1. DEFINITION OF COMPLAINTS

1.1. A complaint is defined as any contact with us by a customer or potential customer in which an allegation is made that any action, or inaction, or any service provided by us has fallen below their expectation.

1.2. A contact will be defined as a complaint if you express dissatisfaction with the services provided by us regardless of whether the complaint is made on behalf of another party or the person making the complaint does not pay charges us.

2. ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

2.1. Complaints which are made anonymously will be considered carefully and action taken where it is warranted. Anonymous complaints will not be recorded by us for reporting purposes.

3. RECEIPT OF COMPLAINTS

3.1. You are asked to direct complaints to our Customer Service Department in the first instance.

3.2. Full details of how to contact us with a complaint will be sent to you annually.

3.3. The telephone number and the address to contact our customer service team about accounts or service issues are:

Accounts and Customer Service Issues

Our team can be contacted by telephone on **01582 344374**

Alternatively, if you need to contact us in writing about an accounts or customer service issue, please write to:
Albion Eco Limited, Customer Services, Harpenden Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1TE
or email to: complaints@albioneco.co.uk

4. COMPLAINTS MADE IN PERSON

4.1. You are encouraged to make a prior appointment if you wish to speak to a named employee or manager although every attempt will be made to meet your wishes when visiting in person.

5. COMPLAINTS MADE BY TELEPHONE

5.1. Telephone calls will be answered promptly. However, it may take longer to answer a call in an emergency situation when a lot of customers are telephoning us so we have to ask you to be patient.

5.2. Employees will give their names when answering telephone calls to provide you with a point of reference should further contact be necessary.

5.3. If the employee who answers a telephone call cannot deal with the complaint, the call and details of the complaint will be passed to someone who can deal with it effectively. If the appropriate person is not available immediately, that person will telephone you later. Where this is unlikely to be the same day, you will be notified of this as soon as possible.

5.4. If you wish to speak to a named employee or a senior manager who is not available

immediately, arrangements will be made for the call to be returned.

5.5. If a complaint made by telephone requires a site visit or other investigation, we will aim to provide a full written response within ten working days.

5.6. Wherever possible, in cases such as a blocked sewer where flooding is imminent, or when water supply has completely failed, an employee or contractor will be on site addressing the problem within four hours of the telephone call being received.

6. WRITTEN COMPLAINTS

6.1. If requested, we will send an acknowledgement of receipt of a written complaint on the day it is received.

6.2. We guarantee to provide a substantive response to all written complaints within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint. In appropriate cases we will provide guidance as to how a complaint may be progressed where it cannot be resolved immediately.

6.3. If we fail to reply within 10 working days a cheque for £30 will be sent to you automatically (unless you have owed us money for more than six weeks or are in arrears with an instalment facility in which case £30 will be credited to your account. You will be informed of this).

6.4. In the case of a complex complaint which may involve us in discussions and negotiations with other parties, then we will keep you informed of progress at least monthly.

6.5. There are exceptions to the requirement to make a payment, and these are:

(a) you inform us that you don't wish to pursue the complaint

(b) industrial action by our employees makes it impractical to despatch a reply within the relevant period

(c) the act or default of a person other than our representative made it impractical to despatch a reply within the relevant period

(d) the complaint was not sent to the address notified in writing by us to our customers as the appropriate address for complaints of that nature

(e) the complaint was frivolous or vexatious, or

(f) the company reasonably considered a visit to be necessary, but severe weather made it impracticable to make the visit

7. HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS

7.1. All complaints will be dealt with courteously, fairly, efficiently and as simply as possible.

7.2. Where it is in our power to do so, the cause of the complaint will be put right as quickly as possible. If we are not responsible for the cause of the complaint a full explanation of why we cannot help will be given together with suggestions as to who you should contact for assistance.

7.3. It may not be possible to remedy some problems immediately. Wherever possible in these cases we will take action to reduce the effect the problem has and keep you informed of action to eliminate the problem in the longer term.

7.4. Complaints will be overseen by one of our complaints handling teams in our customer service team. Staff who deal with complaints have undergone specific training in complaints handling and our procedures and policies for dealing with customers who wish to register a complaint. Regular training in complaints handling is provided for employees.

7.5. A response to a complaint will include:-

- Thanking you for contacting us.
- An apology where we are at fault.

- Explanation of all matters raised by you, including:
  - an explanation of the cause of the problem, where appropriate;
  - a description of the action which has been taken to overcome the problem; or
  - a description of the action which we will be taking together with timescales for that action; or
  - a description of the action which has been taken to reduce the problem together with an explanation of further action planned to resolve the problem ultimately and a commitment to keep you informed of progress; or
  - a full explanation of why we are not able to satisfy your requirements or expectations.
  - Advice on who to contact where responsibility for the problem does not lie with us.
  - A named contact and telephone number for further enquiries where this is appropriate.

8. COMPLAINTS ABOUT EMPLOYEES

8.1. A complaint about an employee of Albion will be reviewed and handled by a Manager or Director senior to the person about whom the complaint has been made.

8.2. In line with our general policy not to discuss publicly matters relating to individual members of staff, any disciplinary action taken by us in response to such a complaint will not be disclosed to the complainant.

9. REDRESS

9.1. If we fail to provide you with a service which it guarantees, financial redress will be made in accordance with the levels set out in our Guaranteed Standards Scheme. Details of these standards, periodically updated, are contained within the Code of Practice.

9.2. Where a complaint involves a matter not covered by the Guaranteed Standards Scheme recompense will be considered taking into account the cause of the problem and loss suffered.

9.3. We may make an ex-gratia payment or provide other redress where an immediate remedy is not available for a problem or where worry or distress has been caused.

9.4. In certain cases, especially those where you allege specific loss or damage, it may be necessary to ask you to provide us with full details, together with receipts for any expense incurred.

10. REGISTERING AND MONITORING OF COMPLAINTS

10.1. All written complaints will be registered by us on the day that they are received. Where the complaint needs to be directed to another office for investigation it will be transferred there on the day it is received.

10.2. In registering a written complaint, we will record the substance of the complaint; any special circumstances relating to the customer; whether a Guaranteed Service Standard is involved; and the date on which a reply is due to be sent as well as details of the person making the complaint.

10.3. Relevant managers will monitor complaints not answered within five days to ensure that target response times are met.

11. TELEPHONE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLAINTS MADE IN PERSON

11.1. Telephone complaints and complaints made in person normally will be recorded on our customer contact system as they are received. However, in an emergency situation it may be necessary to register the complaint at a later stage.
11.2. Relevant managers will monitor complaints not answered within five days to ensure that target response times are met.

12. COMPLAINTS FROM CUSTOMERS FOR WHOM ENGLISH IS NOT THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE

12.1. We will always try to deal with a customer for whom English is not their first language in a way which makes communication easy. The arrangements necessary to enable this may mean that it takes longer to handle these complaints.

13. DISSATISFIED CUSTOMERS

13.1. Where a customer is dissatisfied with the way in which we have handled a complaint, or action it has taken to resolve a problem, the case will be reviewed by the senior manager responsible for the area of the business associated with the complaint.
13.2. If the relevant senior manager has been involved in a case previously the review will be carried out by a Director of Albion to ensure an independent review. Both senior functional managers and the Director are empowered to take any action necessary to resolve the matter under review with the customer and are expected to do so.
13.3. A substantive response will be sent within 10 working days. A £30 payment will be made automatically for failures to meet this target.

14. CUSTOMERS WITH SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

14.1. We recognise that complaining in writing may not be possible for all of our customers. Where you are dissatisfied but are not able to write to explain why, we will make arrangements either to telephone or to visit to take details. Where appropriate we will send a written note of the details we have recorded to confirm that they reflect accurately what we have been told.
14.2. Customers requiring our assistance with registering a complaint should call **01582 344374** and ask for our Special Requirements Complaints Service.
14.3. Only when we know that you are satisfied with what we have recorded will we begin formally to review the complaint. A response will then be made in an appropriate format within 10 working days. This may be by telephone or a further visit but where we do this, we will always send written confirmation afterwards.

15. CCW – The voice for water consumers

15.1. In the event that you remain dissatisfied after a senior manager has reviewed her or his complaint the matter may be referred to the CCW, the independent customer watchdog for the area.
15.2. CCW is independent of us. A complaint may be referred to it at any time but usually it will not begin its own investigations into a complaint until we have had the opportunity to resolve it. The contact details for the local area CCW are:

CCW
Address: 23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham, B2 4BH
Telephone: 0300 034 2222 (England)

	0300 034 3333 (Wales)
Website:	CCW - Online form
Office hours:	Mon to Fri 08:30 to 17:00

16. LEGAL REDRESS

16.1. In some cases you have a legal right to refer a problem either to arbitration, or to the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) for determination, or to the Courts. Where we cannot reach agreement with you in such cases, we will ensure that we notify you of your right to refer the matter to another body.

16.2. Matters which may be referred elsewhere include:

- Financial conditions for water supply or sewerage requisition.
- Entitlement to a free meter.
- Conditions for disconnecting and reconnecting non-domestic supplies
- Extensions to the period within which a sewer must be provided after requisition or the places at which private drains and sewers connect with the requisitioned sewer.
- Adoptions of water mains, sewers and sewage disposal works.
- Conditions for the connection of a drain to a public sewer.
- Requirement that a proposed drain or sewer be constructed so as to form part of the general drainage system.
- Alterations to the drainage system of premises.
- Closure and prohibition of use of a public sewer.
- Our exercise of entry powers on private land.

16.3. Further information on arbitration is included in our Code of Practice.

17. ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS AND PERFORMANCE

17.1. A regular report on types of complaints received and our performance in responding to them is reviewed by the Board. This information will be used to identify areas of service and policy which need to be reviewed and action which needs to be taken to improve services to customers.

17.2. We will undertake regular quality audits of the way in which complaints have been handled. The quality audit may involve customer research.

17.3. Independent audits of the way we handle complaints will also be undertaken at our office by CCW. Its reports on its audits will be addressed to, and reviewed by, our Chief Executive.

18. CONFIDENTIALITY

18.1. All information held about you will be treated in strict confidence. Access to information by employees will be on a "need to know" basis only. Similarly, information relating to individual employees and their actions will be treated as confidential.

18.2. Relevant provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 will apply to information held by us. A disciplinary offence may be committed if an employee releases information protected by the Act.

19. CONTACT DETAILS

Our contact details are set out below.

ALBION ECO LIMITED

Emergency Helpline **01582 344374**

Customer Service Helpline **01582 344374**

Our Customer Service Helpline is open Monday to Friday from 8:30am until 5:30pm.

If you want to write to us about any customer service or billing issue, please use:
Albion Eco Limited, Customer Services, Harpenden Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1TE

Our website – www.albioneco.co.uk - contains customer information and email addresses if you wish to contact us electronically.

THE WATER SERVICES REGULATION AUTHORITY (OFWAT)

Ofwat

Address:	Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham, B5 4UA
Telephone:	0121 644 7500
Website:	Ofwat - Submit an Enquiry

THE CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR WATER

CCW

Address:	23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham, B2 4BH
Telephone:	0300 034 2222 (England) 0300 034 3333 (Wales)
Website:	CCW - Online form
Office hours:	Mon to Fri 08:30 to 17:00

CITIZENS ADVICE (CA)

To find your local CA please contact the central CA using the contact details listed below.

Address:	Myddelton House, 115-123 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9LZ
Telephone:	0808 223 1133 To contact a Welsh-speaking adviser: 0808 223 1144
Website:	http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/