



**“The Bristol Water Bond sets out the levels of service we aim to achieve. It is OUR commitment to serving YOU, our customers.**

Our main objective is to provide you with a safe and reliable supply of water at all times. We are proud of our excellent record from over 160 years of experience. We operate an extensive network involving complex treatment processes and many support services to bring water to your tap, safe to drink. All this is backed up by thorough planning and highly trained staff.

We aim at all times to give good service and deal promptly and fairly with you. We are required by Government to make certain undertakings of service to you. However, where possible, we go further.

We believe that Bristol Water has the trust of its customers and of the communities it serves. We would never intentionally do anything to break that trust - it is our most valuable asset.

Our Bristol Water Bond commitments to you are set out here in clear and simple English. Please keep a copy in case you need to refer to them in future - although we hope the need never arises.”

*Alan Parsons, Managing Director, March 2007*

## OUR COMMITMENTS TO YOU: WATER QUALITY

1. We will supply you with water that is safe to drink, meeting the legal water quality standards. Protecting your health is of paramount importance to us. If there is ever a need to impose ‘boil water’ precautions, give ‘do not use’ advice or suspend supplies for water quality reasons, then we will do so and if the problem is our fault we will pay you £10 compensation.

2. Although we always try to resolve water quality enquiries immediately, we promise to phone you back within 4 hours during the normal working day with any additional water quality information you reasonably require. If your call relates to health concerns we will phone back within 4 hours regardless of the time or day. If we agree it would be helpful to sample your tap water, we will arrange a visit at a convenient time.

3. We will phone you with the results of a sample taken because of a health complaint no later than 2 working days after the results become available. Within 5 working days of all results being available, we will, if you request, confirm them to you in writing.

## WATER SUPPLY

4. We will give you notice of a planned cut off of your water supply and an expected restoration time. We will pay compensation if the cut off lasts more than 4 hours and we had not given you 48 hours prior written notice.\*

5. After planned maintenance work, we will restore supplies within the time specified in the warning notice.\*

6. We will restore supplies interrupted by an emergency within 48 hours of our becoming aware of a burst or a leak on a strategic main or within 12 hours in any other circumstance.\*

7. We aim to provide you with a good flow of water at your tap.\*

8. If you are the first person to report an unidentified leak from our pipes and we have not repaired it within 10 working days, we will pay you £30 (unless we have to give extended notice to the local Highway Authority or third parties).

9. We will usually repair, free of charge, a domestic customer’s external underground supply pipe (up to the external wall of

the house) on the first occasion a leak is found.

10. We will give you leakage allowances if you are a domestic customer when a leak on your pipe causes your metered water use to be higher than normal. For the first leak we will allow you 100% of the higher consumption and for the second leak 50%. You must advise us of the problem and carry out repairs promptly. Allowances for business customers are different.

11. We will help you undertake a water usage audit if requested.

12. We will carry out a survey and fit a meter as quickly as possible (where it is feasible to fit one) and certainly within 45 working days of receiving your signed application form other than during promotional campaigns. This period is extended to 60 working days for applications received in the period March to June. If we do not install the meter by the end of the specified time period we will not charge for water services until the meter is fitted.

13. We will replace your meter within 20 working days of it being discovered to be faulty.

14. When we install or change your water meter we will provide written details including the date, the meter serial number and its reading.

15. If your supply is metered and we agree you need to run water to flush the supply, we will make an allowance of £5.

16. We will carry out a survey within 10 working days of your request for the relocation of a water meter. We charge for this service.

17. We will provide you with a connection to our mains within 10 working days of our final inspection and receipt of your connection charge (unless we have to give extended notice to the local Highway Authority or third parties).

18. If you have replaced your lead or galvanised iron supply pipe, we will replace ours and connect to your new one within 10 working days of our final inspection of your completed work and payment of charges (unless we have to give extended notice to the local Highway Authority or third parties).

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

19. We will respond to your written complaint within 10 working days of receipt.\*

20. If we need to meet you or enter your home, we will offer you an appointment to visit either in the morning or afternoon or, if you request, within a 2 hour time band. Our representative will arrive within the agreed time period. We will give you at least 24 hours notice of the need to rearrange an appointment.\*

21. If you are registered for our Customer Care Plus scheme we will, if requested, send a bill or an item of literature in an agreed format e.g. Braille, large print or communicate with you in a specially requested way. We will process completed applications to join the scheme within 10 working days of receipt.

22. If your property is damaged or flooded because of a burst or leak from a water main, we will offer to clean up and arrange for our appointed loss adjuster to assess your needs and claim.

23. We will recompense you for clothes stained during washing if it is our fault.

24. Company employees and those working on behalf of the Company will treat you courteously.

25. If we fail to pay compensation due by certain deadlines, we will pay you additional compensation.\*

## BILLING/PAYMENTS

26. We will respond to your enquiry concerning the accuracy of a bill we have sent you within 5 working days of receipt or 10 working days if a site visit is required.\*

27. We will rebate an unmetered domestic charge after being notified that a property is unoccupied but furnished as a result of the householder going into hospital or residential care or living with a relative.

28. If you have given us 5 working days notice of when you are moving, we will send a final bill within 5 working days of you leaving.

29. We will issue a replacement bill within 10 working days of your request being received.



30. We will respond within 5 working days if you request a change in payment method that we cannot meet or accept.\*

31. If we take a direct debit payment in error, we will pay your costs and any related bank charges and will correct the error within one working day.

32. If you overpay us as a result of our error, we will repay you together with interest on the overpayment as soon as we are aware of the problem.

33. If you request a receipt for a payment we will send one within 5 working days.

34. If we refer your debt to a debt collection agency they will act properly in accordance with the Credit Industry Code of Practice.

35. If we incorrectly issue a county court claim against you for a debt for which you are not liable and for which you have previously informed us that you are not liable, we will correct the situation and withdraw the fees and costs from your account and give you £100.

### Note 1

\*These commitments are required by law, all the others are our additional discretionary commitments.

## SO WHAT HAPPENS IF WE GET IT WRONG?

We believe our commitments reflect excellent service. They are highly challenging to consistently achieve and go well beyond the minimum legal requirements. Inevitably, though, there will be occasions when things do not go as well as we would like. We are only human, too.

There can be no absolute guarantee that we will always meet our objective of providing a safe and reliable supply at all times. We have significant back-up systems and plans designed to meet most circumstances. But we cannot guarantee to cover every possible situation. To do so would mean duplicating many of our systems – and increasing your bills very significantly. We have to strike an appropriate balance.

**● If things go wrong, we will do our best to get things back to normal as quickly as possible.**

**● In addition, if it is our fault we will pay compensation. If the failure is covered by legislation (see Note 1 left), then we will pay you automatically if we can identify you have been affected. Otherwise you should make a claim. Unless shown differently above, we pay £30. In each case the compensation will be at least at the level laid down by legislation. Usually it will be more.**

## The not so small print

**All documents contain small print – not to try to confuse you but because definitions, conditions and exclusions need to be spelt out in full detail.**

The Bristol Water Bond is no different. The information about the Bond printed on this page is intended to serve simply as a general guide to the commitments we offer. It does not set out in full all our legal obligations to you, nor the circumstances when we will not provide compensation.

Putting it simply, our commitments do not apply if we are prevented from meeting our standards as a result of the actions of a third party or exceptional circumstances such as severe weather, industrial action or abnormal conditions.

Most of our customers are billed by Bristol Wessex Billing Services Ltd jointly for water supplied by Bristol Water and sewerage services handled by Wessex Water. If this is the case, you will receive only one payment per incident that relates to billing or payment matters.

In many matters, compensation is automatic - we will pay you without you having to make a claim at all. Where you need to make a claim for compensation, you must notify Bristol Water in writing as soon as possible and no later than three months after the incident.

Information about the level of compensation and whether you need to claim, plus terms and conditions are detailed in our booklet – Bristol Water Bond: Compensation Schemes. It is available from Citizens’ Advice Bureaux, libraries and on our website [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk) or you can ask for a copy by phoning 0117 9536470 (24 hours). Our other Codes of Practice are also available.

Much of the information provided on this page is directly aimed at domestic customers. We do have a separate Bristol Water Business Bond, published on our website or in a leaflet we can send you. This outlines our commitments on services to business customers. The Bristol Water Bond: Compensation Schemes booklet also details the compensation we offer business customers.