

Change of Occupier FAQs

Why does Bristol Water meter properties when there is a change of occupier?

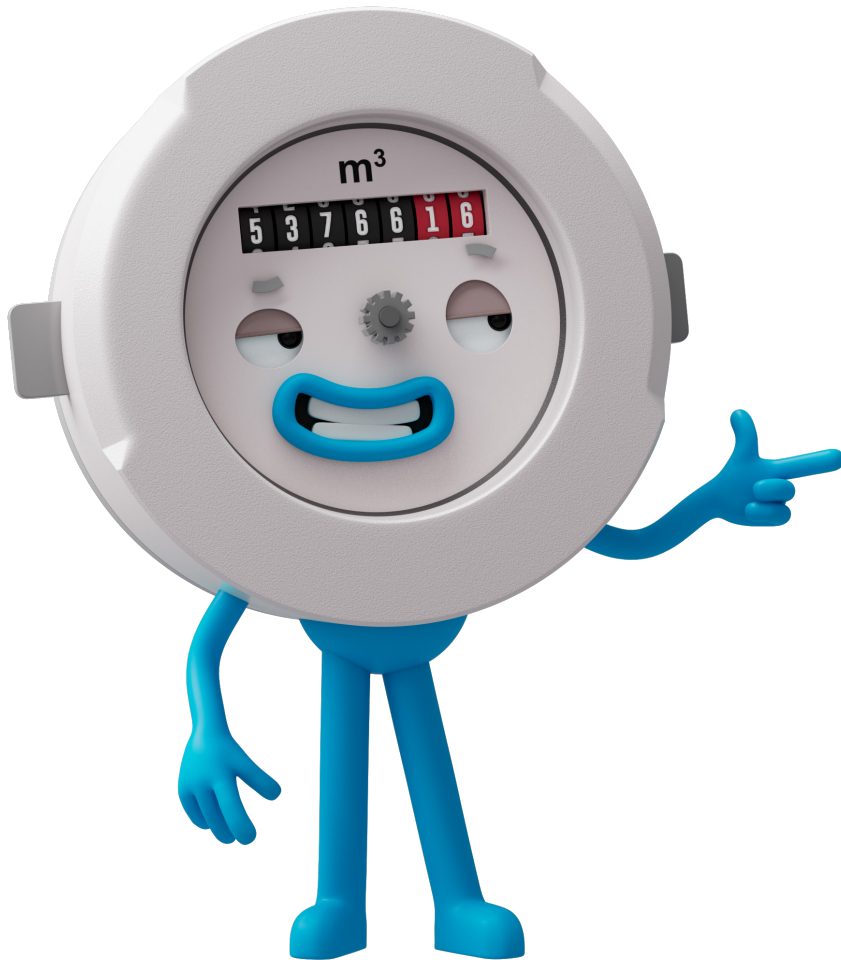
When we created this initiative, we asked customers what their top priority was. They told us that they want affordable bills in the long term, not just for now but for future generations. Water meters are a great way to do this because they allow customers to take full control

their bill and water usage, allow us to quickly identify leaks and improve the balance of supply demand. As a regulated industry, this initiative has also been backed and approved by Ofwat as the best way to achieve our goal of helping customers take control of their water usage.

What's the process?

We'll send you a confirmation letter with more details of the programme and the next steps. Then, we'll carry out a survey to assess whether it's possible to fit your meter, and where the most appropriate place is.

The installation will either be done by one of our surveyors on their first visit, or if further excavation is required, by a contractor on a separate visit. If we're unable to meter your property under our Change of Occupier scheme, you'll continue to pay an unmetred bill.



If you decide after this time that you would prefer to be on a water meter, you can apply online and if it's possible, we will try again to fit a meter for you. To find out whether or not you can save money on a meter, visit our water calculator online.

How long will the process take?

We'll perform a survey within 15 days working days (Monday to Friday). If the installation requires a new boundary box, the installation can take a further 15 working days from the date of the survey,

Can I refuse to have a meter?

Not if your meter was installed under the Change of Occupier scheme, which means your meter was installed when you moved into your new home and you didn't sign up for it. Both Ofwat and the Environment Agency are putting constant pressure on water companies to promote water efficiency and metering is a perfect way of doing this. This means that we're required to fit water meters at properties with a change of occupancy, which also fulfils our responsibility for promoting sustainable water usage in Bristol.

The 1999 Water Act includes a clear set of rules explaining when we can, and cannot fit a meter, it also includes confirmation stating that if we choose to fit one, the law states we are within our rights. We do make a very small amount of exceptions, if you feel that there is a very strong case why one should not be fitted, please write to us at 1 Clevedon Walk, Nailsea, Bristol, BS48 1WA or by email at customer.services@bwbsl.co.uk and we will be happy to consider your circumstance, but unfortunately we cannot guarantee that this will stop the installation.

I have previously been the bill payer of the property, can I still pay a rateable value charge?

When a change of occupier occurs, the property gets a meter fitted so you only pay for the water you use. This is the case even if you've lived in the property before. If you have any concerns or questions about your water usage, you can check out some of our water saving advice on bristolwater.co.uk/how-to-save-water or if you're worried about paying your bill then please get in touch.

Can I choose the location of my meter?

The location of your meter will be decided by our inspector and will depend on the location of your Company Stop Tap (CST). This is usually found in the footpath, or just inside the property's boundary – if we can't locate it, we'll find out where the next best place is.

Can I revert to an unmetered bill?

Not if your home was metered under the change of occupier scheme. If you opted for a meter, you have two years to switch back.

If I have a leak, will I have to pay for it?

If we do find a leak, we'll follow the Leakage Code of Practice for domestic metered customers. This provides up to 100% allowance for the first leak, and 50% of a second leak but as long as the conditions of the Leakage Allowance Scheme have been met.

Who is responsible for the meter?

We're responsible for maintaining or replacing the meter, unless you damage or misuse it. In this case, you'll need to pay for any repair.

Do I need to tell Wessex Water (your sewerage service) about this change?

No, we can do this for you. You'll receive a single bill for water supply and sewerage based on the amount of water you've used.

How will my sewerage charges be affected?

Normally the sewerage element of your metered bill will be based on 95% of your recorded water consumption. This is based on the assumption that 5% of your water will be used to water your garden etc and will therefore not return to the sewer. If you don't think this rate reflects your personal use then please contact our billing department on 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm) and ask for a non-return to sewer form.

How much water might I use?

Generally, water usage tends to vary quite considerably. We've found that on average, domestic water use is about 60 cubic metres per person, per year. Of course this is an approximation, some households might pay less while others might pay more. A big factor to consider is the number of people in the house, the number of automatic washing appliances, the number of baths and showers taken, and how frequently you water your garden (if at all). For any more information on water efficiency, visit bristolwater.co.uk/savewater

When will my meter be read?

Your meter will usually be ready every six months, and you'll receive your bill shortly after one of our meter readers has visited your property. If for any reason your meter can't be read, you'll receive a bill with an estimated consumption either based on a similar period in a previous year, or one based on the best information available at the time.

I'm concerned that I may not be able to afford my bill

We have a range of social tariffs and payment options. If you're concerned about paying your bill, please take a look at our website, or call our billing team on 0345 600 3600.