

## ICOSA WATER SERVICES LIMITED

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### OUR CUSTOMER PROMISE

**2020**



## OUR PROMISES TO YOU

We want to give you the very best service possible at all times and we work hard to ensure that all our customers receive a consistently high level of service, monitoring our performance very carefully.

We try to keep our promises and make sure you're satisfied with what we do for you.

Our commitment is backed up by our Customer Guarantee Standard Services, outlined below which includes all the standards set out in government regulations.

### Appointments

When we make an appointment to visit you, we will advise you whether we will visit either before or after 1pm. You can then request the visit in a 2-hour period. If we do not keep the appointment as made, we will credit your account with £50. We aim to meet all our appointment times. If we cannot, we will let you know at least 24 hours in advance.

If we fail to make an appointment or cancel the appointment with less than 24 hours' notice, we will credit your water services account with £50. Payments will not apply if the appointment is cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice because of circumstances beyond our control, for example extreme weather conditions, strikes or the actions of a third party.

If we fail to credit your account within 10 working days of the missed appointment date, you will be entitled to an additional £10 penalty payment credited to your account.

### Account queries

We aim to respond to written queries about your water services account within 5 working days, if we fail to respond to a written query regarding the correctness of our charges within 10 working days of receiving it, we will credit your water services account with £30. If we fail to credit your account within 10 working days of our reply, you will be entitled to an additional £10 penalty payment credited to your account.

### Payment arrangements

We will respond to a written request to change your payment arrangements within 5 working days of receiving your request. If we fail to meet this standard, we will credit your water services account with £30. If we fail to credit your account within 10 working days of our reply, you will be entitled to a further £10 penalty payment credited to your account.

### Written complaints

We will respond to written complaints within 10 working days. In the unlikely event that we fail to meet this timescale, we will pay you £30. We must make this payment within 10 working days from the date we were due to provide you a response by. If we fail to credit your account within 10 working days of our reply, you will be entitled to an additional £10 penalty payment credited to your account.



## Debt recovery action

If we incorrectly issue a County Court judgement against you in respect of 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, withdraw the fees and costs, crediting your water services account with £150. If we fail to credit your account within 10 working days, you will be entitled to an additional £10 penalty payment credited to your account.

## Debt collection

There are circumstances when we will refer customers' debts to a debt collection agency. The agencies we use are registered with the Financial Conducts Authority and are members of the Credit Services Association and subject to its code of practice.

In the unlikely event that a debt is pursued this way in error, or the debt collection agent acts improperly, we will credit your water services account with £25. In some circumstances, we register a default against customers' credit files held by Credit Reference Agencies. In the unlikely event that a debt is pursued this way in error, we will correct the situation and credit your water service account with £25.

If we fail to credit your account within 10 working days, you will be entitled to an additional £10 penalty payment credited to your account.

## Exceptional circumstances

In certain circumstances it will be impractical for us to meet our service standards. In such cases you will not be entitled to a payment.

Examples of where exclusions may apply are:

- Exceptional or severe weather conditions
- Industrial action
- Third party action including action by customers.

Where a payment is made, it does not act as an admission of liability for any other purpose. Similarly, its acceptance by the customer, will not affect any other liability owed to them.

Any disputes arising in relation to the Guaranteed Standards Scheme may be referred to Ofwat for determination. Its decision is binding.

## Dealing with compensation

Payments will be made within 10 working days. If we fail to make a payment within this time, you are entitled to claim a penalty payment of £30 unless otherwise stated. You must claim the penalty payment within 3 months.

## Access

Where we are undertaking works and require access to your property, we will agree the timing and any specific access requirements in advance. Failure to consult will result in a £25 payment in respect of each affected property. If we fail to credit your account within 10 working days of our failure to consult with you, you will be entitled to an additional £10 penalty payment credited to your account.



## **Water pressure**

If your water pressure falls substantially below normal, please let us know. We will first check whether this is due to an operational fault for example a burst main. If not, then we will carry out further checks with pressure loggers.

If we have identified a pressure level in the communication pipe below seven meters static head for at least 1 hour on two separate occasions within a 28-day period, you are automatically entitled to a £50 payment. If we fail to credit your account within 20 working days of the incident you will be entitled to an additional £10 penalty payment credited to your account.

It is sometimes difficult to know who has been affected by low pressure. If you were affected and we have not credited your account, please call us within 3 months of the last of the two occasions of low pressure.

If significantly high-water pressure causes any damage to your water fittings as a result of our negligence, we will pay for the cost of any repairs to these fittings.

## **Water shortages**

If we have to interrupt or cut off your supply as a result of a Drought Order, we will except in exceptional circumstances automatically pay you £10 for each day, or part day, that your water supply is interrupted. This is up to a maximum of the average household water bill from the previous year.

## **Interruptions to supply**

Occasionally we need to turn off the water supply to carry our essential, planned work. We will let you know in advance and tell you when the supply will be restored.

For interruptions of more than 4 hours, we will give you at least 48 hours' notice in writing. We will restore the supply by the time stated in the notice.

If we fail to correctly notify you of the interruption or if the supply is not restored within the stated time, we'll credit your water services account with £30.

After an emergency or unplanned interruption, we will restore supplies within 12 hours for most bursts or within 48 hours if it is a burst on a strategic main. If necessary, we will give you an alternative supply. If we fail to meet any of these standards, we will automatically credit £30 to your account and a further £10 for every additional 12 hours that you remain without water. Payment will be made within 20 working days from the date of the interruption. If we fail to make a payment within this time, we will pay you a further £30.

It is sometimes difficult to know who has been affected by these interruptions. If you were affected and we have not credited your account, please contact our Customer Service Team.

If you experience three or more unplanned interruptions lasting more than 15 hours in total within a 12month period, you can claim £25.



## Discolouration

Very occasionally you may find that your water supply is a brownish colour. This discolouration is often caused by work being carried out on ageing iron mains and although unsightly, poses not health risk. If laundry is stained because of water discolouration due to our mains, we'll compensate you for the cost of the affected items.

If other damage is caused e.g. damage to your boiler, we will arrange for a plumber to visit your property and pay the appropriate compensation.

## Drinking water quality

If we believe there is a problem with the quality of your tap water due to our water supply system, we will provide you with appropriate advice on what to do. If you complain about our water making you ill, we'll contact you within 2 hours of receiving the complaint to arrange for the water at your tap to be tested.

If the problem lasts for longer than 48 hours and is specific to your property or to a group of local properties, we will pay you £30 automatically. However, if the problem is more widespread, we will consider compensation where it is proved to be the result of our negligence.

If you tell us that you are unhappy with the taste or smell of your water, we will investigate. Please note that all our tap water contains chlorine, which helps to keep the water safe to drink – it is there for normal for your tap water to have a slight chlorine taste or smell.

If you report a water quality problem which we consider could have an impact on the safety of your water supply, we will visit you within 4 hours (if it is convenient with you) and arrange for an alternative supply if necessary. In this circumstance, if we take a sample of water for analysis at our laboratory, we will give you an explanation of the key results by phone within 48 hours if you request it and confirm key results in writing within 10 working days.

If we don't meet any part of this timetable, you can claim £30. Please note that this doesn't not apply if we tell you the analysis will take more than 48 hours.

## Water meters

We will undertake a survey and fit a meter within 50 working days from receipt of your request. If we do not meet this timescale, we will only bill you the metered standing charge element of your bill until the meter has been fitted.

Since 1 April 2000 customers have been entitled to a Switchback Guarantee when applying for a water meter. The guarantee gives you the right to revert to rateable value-based charges anytime within the first 24 months. However, you will still need to pay for any metered charges incurred before you opt back.

Please note: the meter will remain in position and future occupants will be charged on metered usage.

## Meter relocation

For elderly customers and those with additional needs who are having difficulty reading their meter and would like it relocated, we will carry out a free survey. If it is possible to move the



meter, we will move it free of charge. If we are unable to move it, we will let you know why.

For customers who are unable to read their meter themselves or want to monitor their consumption we can provide a service whereby we read their meter four times a year.

## **Leakage**

If you are on a metered supply, the meter will record the water we supply to your property, which will include any leak on your supply pipe or from appliances in your home. However, if the cause of the leak is fully repaired, you will qualify for a one-off leak allowance, where we will adjust your charges back to their normal levels. Where we have no record of previous usage, e.g. you have recently moved into the property, we will estimate your normal usage. If subsequent meter readings show your actual usage to be lower than our estimate, we will make a further adjustment to reflect this.

If you are worried that you may have a leak on your supply pipe, please contact us and we will arrange for a technician to visit and check your supply. If our visit confirms that there is a leak, we will advise you to contact your plumber for this to be repaired. Details of the assistance we can give to the cost of the repair or replacement are outlined in our Leakage Code of Practice.

If the repair is completed within 30 days of the date of our technician's visit, we will make an allowance for the leak as a credit to your water bill.

If the repair takes longer than 30 days, the value of the allowance may be reduced. Time to repair 30-60 days allowance reduced by 33%; 60-90 days allowance reduced by 66%. More than 90 days no allowance

You should apply for the leak allowance once the leak has been satisfactorily repaired and within one month of the repair being carried out. A copy of the invoice for the repair work will be required. If you are unable to provide this, we may need to visit your property to inspect the repair. Leak allowances are not made where the leak is due to customer negligence. Customers may receive one leak allowance per property.

## **Sewer flooding**

On rare occasions where there is a blockage or collapse in one of our sewers, or where exceptionally heavy rainfall has overloaded our sewer, some properties may experience sewage flooding. If this happens, please call us straight away. We will investigate the cause of sewage flooding following all reported incidents. If sewage enters your home from our sewer network, we aim to inspect the problem within 4 hours of you letting us know.

We will also provide a full clean up service where possible within 12 hours (internal flooding or within 24 hours (external flooding).

Where the sewage flooding enters your home, we will automatically refund your sewage charge for the year (minimum payment £150 up to a maximum of £1,000 per incident). In addition to this sum, we will automatically pay you up to £100 for the disturbance the sewage flooding causes., We will determine the amount payable on a case by case basis. Where the sewage flooding has caused damage to your home or contents, we will consider contributing to your uninsured losses.



If you have a critical health related circumstances at the time of the sewage flooding and you arrange to move into temporary accommodation, we will consider making a discretionary payment of up to £50 per day, up to a maximum of £500 towards your costs.

If we fail to credit your account within 20 working days, you will be entitled to an additional £20 penalty payment credited to your account.

If sewage enters your garden from our sewer network, we aim to inspect the problem the same day you let us know. Where the sewage flooding enters only your land or garden, you can claim back a sum equal to half of your sewage charges for the year (minimum payment £75 up to a maximum of £500 per incident).

If we fail to credit your account within 20 working days, you will be entitled to an additional £20 penalty payment credited to your account.

Your claim will only be valid if you were materially affected by the sewage flooding incident to your land or garden. You will therefore need to show or explain the effect of the sewage flooding, on your land or garden when you make a claim.

Normally, we will make this assessment when we visit to view the sewage flooding and we will leave a claim form with you if we consider you have been materially affected. We only accept written claims for external sewage flooding and will assess your claim based upon the information you provide.

If you are affected by both internal and external sewage flooding in the same incident, we will only pay you for the internal sewage flooding incident. You will not receive an additional payment for the external sewage flooding. We will also assist with the clean-up of the public highway if this has been affected by the sewage flooding incident.

Payments will not apply if:

- The flooding happened because of exceptional weather conditions or industrial action,
- The flooding was caused by a customer's actions or any defect, blockage or inadequacy in the customer's drain or sewers,
- You notified us more than three months after your property was flooded.

## COMPLAINTS

### Did we meet your expectations?

When you raise a query or want to make a complaint about our service, we don't want it to be an unpleasant experience for either of us.

We want to provide you with a first-rate customer service at all times. We appreciate, however, that sometimes we don't always get it right. If you're unhappy let us know straight away so we can discuss the situation with you and decide what we need to do.

Our complaints procedure has been developed to ensure that all employees and contractors working on our behalf are able to handle customer complaints effectively, whether face to face, over the telephone or in writing.



## What you can expect

Please contact us as soon as possible if you are not satisfied.

We aim to operate in a way that makes communication easy, offering a variety of ways of getting in touch with us, including by telephone, by email, by letter or face to face. If there is anything more, we can do to make it easier for you to get in contact with us, please let us know.

We will respond to written complaints within then10 working days which follow the day that we receive your complaint. In the unlikely event that we fail to meet this timescale, we will pay you £30. We must make this payment within the 10 working days from the date we were due to provide you a response by. If we fail to do this, you can claim a further £10.

We keep a record of all the complaints we get and use them to improve our service, these records are also monitored, reviewed and audited by us and our regulators.

If we fail to meet any of our standards, well pay you compensation in line with our customer charter. If we've made a mistake and you are entitled to compensation you can expect to receive it promptly.

## OUR COMPLAINTS PROCESS

### Stage One – Customer Care Team

We'll hand your complaint to one of our Customer Care Team. This person will write to you to make a telephone appointment to discuss the issue and set out how we plan to resolve it. They will then personally look after your complete, keeping you fully informed along the way until you are happy that the matter is resolved. We will then confirm the outcome that we've agreed with you in writing within 7 working days.

### Stage Two – Escalation to Senior Manager

In the rare case that you remain unhappy and feel that our Customer Care Team haven't resolved the matter to your satisfaction, you can choose to escalate your complaint to an appropriate Senior Manager or Director who will review the case. They will then write to you explaining the outcome of their review.

### Stage Three – What happens if I'm still not happy?

If, having fully exhausted this process, we haven't resolved the complaint to your satisfaction, you may take your complaint to the Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) who may act on your behalf to try to resolve your complaint with us. They are an independence body set up to protect your interests and to champion customer issues.

**CCWater contact details:** 0330 034 2222, ccwater.org.uk, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Victoria Square House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B2 4AJ.



## GETTING IN TOUCH WITH US

If you would like to discuss any aspect of our service, please contact our Customer Service Team. There are a number of ways in which you can contact us.

### You can write to us at:

Icosa Water Services  
Sophia House  
Cathedral Road  
Cardiff  
CF11 9LJ

### Telephone:

If you have any queries, please feel free to call our teams:

Customer Service Team on **0330 111 0780**.

Billing Team on **0333 000 0113**

### Email us:

[billing@icosawater.co.uk](mailto:billing@icosawater.co.uk)

[customerservices@icosawater.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@icosawater.co.uk)

### Our office hours for general and billing enquires are:

Monday – Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm (Excluding Bank Holidays).

### Drainage Emergencies:

For any drainage emergencies please call our 24-hour emergency number **0330 111 2014**.

Our website [www.icosawater.co.uk](http://www.icosawater.co.uk) contains further company information. If you do not have access to the internet, we can send you any relevant information that you require by post

