

CODE OF PRACTICE

northern ireland
water



Delivering what matters

Our Complaints Procedure





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We're committed to giving you, our customer, the best possible service – all day, every day.

We work hard to ensure that all our customers receive a consistently high level of service, and we monitor our performance very carefully. We want to hear from you if you are dissatisfied with any of our services.

In this Code of Practice, we explain:

- How you can make a complaint
- How we will handle your complaint
- What you can do if you remain unhappy.

All our information leaflets and letters can be requested in the following formats:

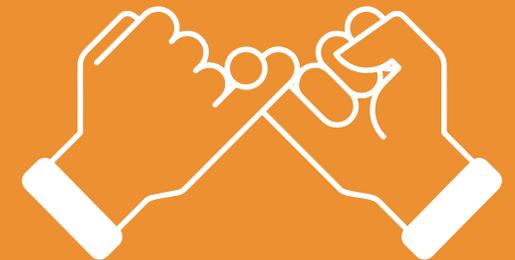
- Braille
- large print
- CD and audio tape.

The information leaflets can all be downloaded from niwater.com



Our Promises: at a glance

- We'll answer the phone within 45 seconds when you call us.
- We'll try to resolve your complaint during your call if you phone us.
- We'll explain what we need to do, and we will tell you when we will contact you if we need to investigate.
- We'll undertake a thorough investigation and reply to you within 10 working days if you make a complaint in writing or by email.
- We'll contact you, where necessary, to discuss your complaint.
- We'll apologise and you will receive a full, fair, and courteous response if your complaint relates to a mistake we've made.
- We'll postpone recovery action on your account until our investigations are complete and you've been informed of the outcome if you submit a billing complaint.
- We'll explain what action will be taken and give a timescale for resolving the problem.
- If we're unable to meet your expectations, we'll explain why.
- We'll try to assist by pointing you in the right direction if we are not responsible for the cause of the complaint.





Our Complaints Procedure

It's important to us always to provide the best possible service. So, if you ever feel we've fallen short of this, we'd like to hear from you. We'll work with you to put things right as quickly as possible and will always try to use your feedback to improve things for our customers.

How do you make a complaint?

If you want to make a complaint about your water or sewerage services, we offer a range of ways for you to get in touch.

You can contact us by telephone on Waterline:

-  **Phone:** Waterline 03457 440088
-  **Text Relay Service:** 03457 440088

You can also submit a complaint via the 'Contact Us' section on our Self-Service website or by email:

-  **Self-Service and email:**
digitalservices.niwater.com/contact-form#Complaint
-  **Email:** waterline@niwater.com

If you want to send a letter, our postal address is:

-  **Northern Ireland Water**
PO Box 1026
Belfast BT1 9DJ

If you contact us by post or email, please include a contact telephone number in case we need to clarify any information relating to your complaint.

If you contact us through social media channels, such as Facebook or Twitter, we may ask you to contact us by telephone or by email.

Our Waterline service is staffed 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Our email channels are monitored between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).



Our Complaints Procedure

continued

If you wish to make a complaint about your bill or account, please contact us by telephone on Billing Enquiries 03458 770030, through our Self-Service website, or in writing by email or by post.

Our Billing Enquiries telephone line is open from:

- 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday
- 8am to 6pm on Saturdays;
and 12 noon to 6pm on Sundays.

We'll record details of who has contacted us and the reason for the complaint.

This information is used to help us improve our services, the handling of our complaints, and to report our performance annually to the Utility Regulator.

If you ask somebody else to contact us on your behalf, we'll follow the same procedure. However, you'll be responsible for the costs of any solicitors/agents you've instructed to represent you. We'll require your written authority for someone to deal with us on your behalf.

Anonymous complaints will not be recorded by us for reporting purposes but will be considered carefully and acted upon where possible.

**Billing
Enquiries**

03458 770030



How do we handle your complaint?

Telephone

We always aim to resolve telephone complaints the first time you call us. If the matter requires further investigation, we'll explain what we need to do and will advise you when you can expect us to contact you.

Letters and emails

We'll respond to written complaints (letters and emails) within 10 working days of the date received, or sooner if possible. Your complaint will be assigned to a Customer Service Officer, who will keep you informed whilst any necessary investigations progress. They will contact you, where necessary, to discuss your complaint.

Taking it Further

Internal review

If you are not satisfied with our response, you can ask us to review how we handled your initial complaint. A manager with the authority to override or support the original response will review our original response and contact you within 10 working days, or sooner if possible.

Independent help and advice from the Consumer Council

If you remain unhappy with how we initially dealt with your complaint or would like free, independent advice, you can contact the Consumer Council. The Consumer Council has

the power to act on your behalf and investigate your complaint about our services. It can also provide assistance if you are making a complaint.

-  **Consumer Council**
Floor 3, Seatem House
28-32 Alfred Street Belfast
BT2 8EN
-  **Phone:** 0800 121 6022
-  **Textphone:** 028 9025 1600
-  **Fax:** 028 9025 1663
-  **Email:** contact@consumercouncil.org.uk
-  **Website:** www.consumercouncil.org.uk



Our Promises

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- We'll undertake a thorough investigation and reply to you within 10 working days if you make a complaint in writing or by email.
- We'll contact you, where necessary, to discuss your complaint.
- We'll apologise and you will receive a full, fair, and courteous response if your complaint relates to a mistake we've made.
- We'll postpone recovery action on your account until our investigations are complete and you have been informed of the outcome if you submit a billing complaint.

- We'll explain what action will be taken and give a timescale for resolving the problem.
- If we're unable to meet your expectations, we'll explain why.
- We'll try to assist by pointing you in the right direction if we're not responsible for the cause of the complaint.

Confidentiality

We'll treat all information you give us securely and hold it in strict confidence. Access to information by employees and others working on behalf of Northern Ireland Water will be on a 'need to know' basis only.

Where we hold personal information, it will be processed in compliance with the Data Protection legislation. If you authorise somebody else to contact us on your behalf, we may include personal information where relevant to the response.





Further Information

This Code of Practice is part of a set of information leaflets about us and our services. The other Codes of Practice in the set include:

‘Sewerage Services’: This gives you information about the sewerage system, who is responsible for pipework, flooded sewers, new connections and our right to enter your property.

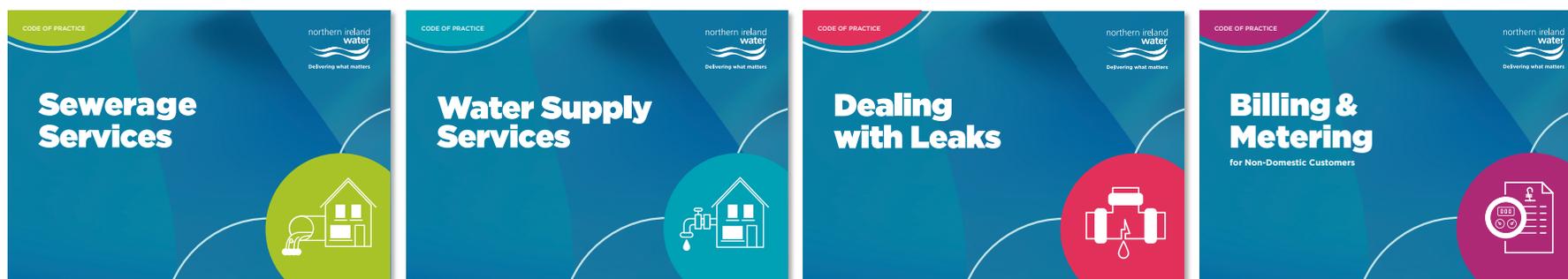
‘Water Supply Services’: This gives you information on our code of practice for water services.

‘Work on Private Land’: This gives you information on our code of practice if we need to work on private land.

‘Dealing with Leaks’: This gives you information on our code of practice on leaks and who owns pipes.

‘Billing & Metering for Non-Domestic customers’: This gives you information on our codes of practice on billing and metering arrangements.

We offer a range of other information leaflets, which are all available on our website.





Other Useful Contacts

The Utility Regulator

If your complaint is about our standards of service, non-compliance with our licence conditions or statutory obligations and we haven't resolved it, you may wish to contact the Utility Regulator. This is the independent non-ministerial government department responsible for regulating Northern Ireland Water.

 **The Utility Regulator**
Queens House
14 Queen Street Belfast BT1 6ED

 **Phone:** 028 9031 1575
 **Fax:** 028 9031 1740
 **Email:** info@uregni.gov.uk
 **Website:** www.uregni.gov.uk

Drinking Water Inspectorate

If you have complained to us about the quality of the water you receive and you're unhappy with our response or feel we have not fully resolved the problem, you can contact the Drinking Water Inspectorate, which will carry out a further investigation.

 **Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland**
Klondyke Building
Cromac Avenue Gasworks
Business Park Lower Ormeau
Road Belfast BT7 2JA

 **Phone:** 028 9056 9282
 **Fax:** 028 9031 1740
 **Email:** dwi@daera-ni.gov.uk
 **Website:** www.daera-ni.gov.uk



 **Northern Ireland Water**
PO Box 1026
Belfast BT1 9DJ

 **Waterline**
03457 440088

 **Text Relay Service**
03457 440088

 **Self-Service**
<https://digitalservices.niwater.com>

 **Email**
waterline@niwater.com

 **Web Chat**
www.niwater.com/contact-us/

 **Facebook**
www.facebook.com/niwater/

 **Twitter**
www.twitter.com/niwnews

 **Website**
www.niwater.com