



## Water industry facts and figures

### Bills

The average household bill in 2008-09 for water and sewerage is £330 (the average water bill is £157 and the average sewerage bill is £174). This is an increase in real terms of 44% since 1989.

Industry average household bills					
Unmetered	Real % change to bills 1989-2008 (excl. inflation)	Level (£) from 1 April 2008	Metered	Real % change to bills 1989-2008 (excl. inflation)	Level (£) from 1 April 2008
Water	56%	£166	Water	-8%	£139
Sewerage	49%	£180	Sewerage	-1%	£161
Combined	52%	£347	Combined	-5%	£299

- The average daily cost for households for water and sewerage service is 90p a day in 2008-09.
- A litre of tap water costs 0.22p, including sewage treatment costs.
- From April 2008, bills for water and sewerage services went up by an average of 5.78% (including 4.28% inflation). Water bills went up by 4.89% and sewerage bills went up by 6.66%.

### Price limits

Average price limits	1990-95 set at privatisation	1995-2000 Ofwat's determinations	2000-05 Ofwat's determinations	2005-10 Ofwat's determinations
Water and sewerage companies	5.0%	1.4%	-1.5%	4.3%
Water companies	6.1%	0.4%	-2.4%	3.2% (taking DVW and BRL IDoKs into account)
Industry	5.2%	1.3%	-1.6%	4.2%

- Our 2000-05 determinations take account of the Competition Commission's determinations for Mid Kent Water and Sutton & East Surrey Water and of various interim determinations between 2000 and 2004.
- The industry average price limit for 2008-09 is 2.5%. This was -12.3% in 2000-01, -0.3% in 2001-02, 0.3% in 2002-03, 1.9% in 2003-04, 3.4% in 2004-05, 9.6% in 2005-06, 3.9% in 2006-07 and 3.2% in 2007-08.

## Capital investment

Average annual capital investment (water and sewerage) all 2006-07 prices						
	1980-85	1985-90	1990-95	1995-2000	2000-05	2005-10
Water and sewerage companies	£1.7bn	£2.1bn	£3.7bn	£4.0bn	£3.5bn	£3.6bn
Water companies	n/a	n/a	£0.2bn	£0.3bn	£0.2bn	£0.2bn
Industry	n/a	n/a	£4.0bn	£4.3bn	£3.7bn	£3.8bn

- Since privatisation, the industry has invested approximately £70 billion (2006-07 prices) in improving drinking water quality and higher environmental standards.
- Under Ofwat, investment in water and sewerage services is at its highest-ever level.

## Customer service

Customer service	Time close to privatisation	2006-07
% of written complaints answered in 10 working days	81.9% (1992-93)	98%
% of billing contacts answered in 5 working days	79.8% (1992-93)	95%
Number of compensation payments (GSS)	11,388 (1993-94)	132,909

Water distribution			
Properties at risk of low pressure	1.33% (1990-95)	0.03% (2005-06)	0.02% (2006-07)
Unplanned interruptions over 12 hours	0.33% (1990-95)	0.08% (2005-06)	0.15% (2006-07)

- Ofwat obtained compensation and rebates of more than £12 million between 1991 and March 2007.
- Ofwat dealt with approximately 165,000 complaints from customers between September 1989 and March 2007.

## Environmental improvements

Environmental quality	1990-91	Latest figures
River water chemical quality – good	47% (1990)	70% (2006)
River water biological quality – good	62% (1990)	72% (2006)
Coastal bathing water compliance	66% (1988)	99.4% (2006)
Sewage treatment works compliance	90%	99% (2006)
Unsatisfactory combined sewer overflows	31% (1994-95)	8.8% (2006)
Sewer flooding incidents – % of connections	0.03% (1990-95)	0.02% (2006)

Drinking water quality – percentage of tests complying with standards									
1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
99.75%	99.78%	99.82%	99.83%	99.86%	99.87%	99.88%	99.94%	99.96%	99.96%

- Sewerage treatment works compliance is based on the equivalent population served by works in breach of the lower tier conditions for sanitary determinants in the discharge consent.
- In 1990 only 99% of water quality tests met the required standards.

## Leakage

Leakage rates in litres per property per day (l/p/d)	1994-95 peak since privatisation	2006-07
Industry	228 l/p/d	141.3 l/p/d

- Since its peak in 1994-95 leakage has fallen by about one-third, enough to supply the daily needs of more than ten million people.

## Did you know?

- The UN estimates that 2.7 billion people will face water scarcity by 2025. Some 40% of the world's population now live in countries with water shortages, and tens of millions of children will die because of water-borne disease that could largely be eliminated with improved sanitation – **'The Guardian', 2005.**
- The UK water industry collects, treats and supplies more than 16 billion litres of water a day to domestic and commercial consumers and then collects and treats more than 10 billion litres of the resulting wastewaters, returning them safely to the environment – **Water UK.**
- In one hour, a garden sprinkler can use the equivalent of two days' water consumption by a family of four – **UK Round Table on Sustainable Development.**
- In 2007-08, approximately 33% of households were on metered charges – **Ofwat.**
- The water industry has more than 700,000 kilometres of mains and sewers (640,206 kilometres in England and Wales, enough to stretch to the moon and back – **Water UK.**
- It takes 2,000 tons of water to grow a ton of rice and some 1,000 tons of water to grow a ton of wheat – **World Water Commission.**
- The UK water industry has 1,584 boreholes, 666 reservoirs and 602 river abstractions – two-thirds of our water comes from surface water and one-third from groundwater – **Water UK.**

**Ofwat costs each customer in England and Wales  
on average about 75p a year.**

**Ofwat** (the Water Services Regulation Authority) is a non-ministerial government department. We are responsible for making sure that the water industry in England and Wales provides customers with a good quality and efficient service at a fair price.

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