

# Facts and figures – May 2006

## Bills

The average household bill in 2006-07 is £294 for water and sewerage (average water bill is £142 and the average sewerage bill is £152). This is a real terms increase of 39.1% since 1989.

Industry average household bills					
Unmeasured	Real % change to bills 1989-2007 (excluding inflation)	Level (£) from 1 April 2006	Measured	Real % change to bills 1989-2007 excluding inflation)	Level (£) from 1 April 2006
Water and sewerage combined	50.6%	£149	Water and sewerage combined	-10.2%	£126
	40.5%	£157		-5.6%	£142
	45.3%	£305		-7.8%	£268

- The average daily costs for households for the water and sewerage service is 81 pence per day in 2006-07.
- A litre of tap water costs 0.10 pence, and 0.19 pence including sewage treatment costs.
- Household customers' bills increased on average by 3.1%, excluding inflation, from 1 April 2006. Including inflation the increase is 5.5%.

## 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%	3.1%
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. For more information, see our leaflet 'Water and sewerage bills 2004-2005'.
- The industry average price limit for 2006-07 is 3.9%. 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 and 9.6% in 2005-06.

## Capital investment

Average annual capital investment (water and sewerage) all 2002-03 prices						
	1980-85	1985-90	1990-95	1995-2000	2000-05	2005-10
Water and sewerage companies	£1.5bn	£1.9bn	£3.3bn	£3.5bn	£3.1bn	£3.2bn
Water companies	n/a	n/a	£0.2bn	£0.3bn	£0.2bn	£0.2bn
Industry	n/a	n/a	£3.5bn	£3.8bn	£3.3bn	£3.4bn

- Between 1989 and 2010 more than £67 billion will have been invested in improved 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	2004-05
% of written complaints answered in 10 working days	81.9% (1992-93)	99.7%
% of billing contacts answered in 5 working days	79.8% (1992-93)	99.5%
Number of compensation payments (GSS)	11,388 (1993-94)	28,703

Water distribution			
Properties at risk of low pressure	1.33% (1990-95)	0.04% (2003-04)	0.03% (2004-05)
Unplanned interruptions over 12 hours	0.33% (1990-95)	0.14% (2003-04)	0.06% (2004-05)

- Compensation and rebates obtained: nearly £9.5 million since 1991.
- The WaterVoice committees dealt with 11,152 complaints in 2004-05.
- We have dealt with 161,458 complaints from customers between September 1989 and September 2005.

## Environmental improvements

Environmental quality	1990-91	Latest figures
River water chemical quality – good	47% (1990)	65% (2004)
River water biological quality – good	62% (1990)	71% (2004)
Coastal bathing water compliance	66% (1988)	98.5% (2004)
Sewage treatment works compliance	90%	99.9% (2004)
Unsatisfactory combined sewer overflows	31% (1994-95)	13% (2004)
Sewer flooding incidents – % of connections	0.03% (1990-95)	0.02% (2005)

Drinking water quality – percentage of tests complying with standards									
1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
99.5%	99.7%	99.75%	99.78%	99.82%	99.83%	99.86%	99.87%	99.88%	99.94%

- Sewage treatment works compliance is based on the equivalent population served by works in breach of the lower tier (look-up table) conditions for sanitary determinands 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	1994-95 leakage peak since privatisation	2004-05 leakage
Industry	228 l/p/d	151 l/p/d

- Since its peak in 1994-95 leakage has fallen by around a third, enough to supply the daily needs of more than 10 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 die because of water-borne disease that could largely be eliminated with improved sanitation – **The Guardian, 2005.**
- The UK water industry collects, treats and then supplies over 16 billion litres per day of water to domestic and commercial customers and then collects and treats over 10 billion litres of the resulting wastewaters, returning them safely to the environment – **Water UK.**
- In one hour a sprinkler can use the equivalent of two days' consumption by a family of four – **UK Round Table on Sustainable Development.**
- In 2005-06 approximately 28% of households were on metered charges. This is expected to rise to 30% by March 2007 – **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 less than 50 pence a year.**

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