



Getting your new smart meter

Here's everything you
need to know

The thirsty future

We provide around 2.6 billion litres of water every day to more than nine million customers across London and the Thames Valley – an area the Secretary of State for the Environment has designated as being seriously water-stressed.

On average, we each use almost a third more water than we did 30 years ago. Our forecasts show that if we do nothing and continue as we are, by 2020 there will be a shortfall of 133 million litres per day in the amount of water available, the equivalent of 53 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

This situation will only get more difficult as our population grows and our climate changes, bringing less summer rainfall and more weather extremes including flooding and drought.

What are we doing to save water?

Installing water meters is at the centre of our plan to reduce demand.

To reduce this further, we are also:

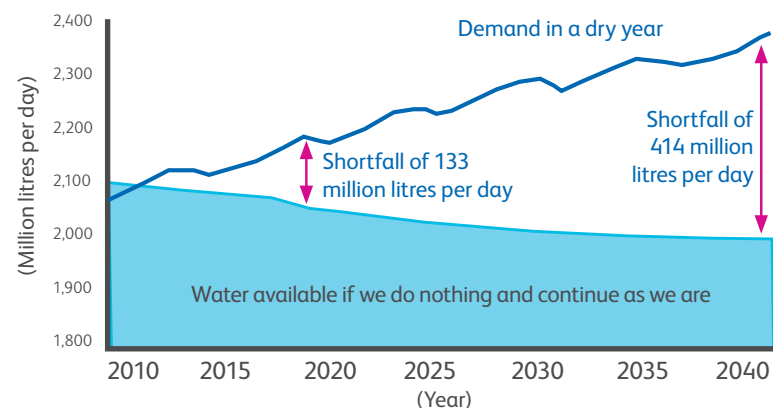
Reducing leakage: This is down by a third since its peak in 2004.

Helping customers use less water: We provide free water-saving devices.

Providing back-up supplies: Our desalination plant treats water from the Thames during very dry weather.

Building additional resources: From 2025 a new source of water will be required. Options are under review.

Forecast gap between supply and demand in London



Source: Water Resources Management Plan, 2014

Why smart meters?

We all have a vital role to play in reducing demand for water, but first everyone needs to understand how much they are using. That's why we're fitting smart meters across our region as by knowing more we can all waste less.

Meters are the fairest way to pay, as you only pay for what you use. Once your new smart meter is turned on, you'll be able to go online or call us to understand how much water you're using. This will give you greater control of your usage and your bill. You'll be able to see how efficient your household is and track how your water-saving efforts are paying off.

To help make the change to a meter as easy as possible for you, we will:

- ✓ **Help you adjust:** You will not be moved on to a metered account until two years after your meter is activated to give you time to understand your water use and charges.
- ✓ **Keep in touch:** We'll send you comparison bills so you can see how a meter could impact your bill and find out if you would save money by switching to a meter early.
- ✓ **Help you save water, energy and money:** Once your meter has been fitted you can sign up for a free Smarter Home Visit during which we'll fit free water-saving devices that could help you reduce your bills.
- ✓ **Credit your account:** If we find your metered bill would be lower than your unmetered charges, we'll credit your account with the difference if you ask to switch within the first year.
- ✓ **Fix any leaks we find on your supply pipe** free of charge.
- ✓ **Provide extra support** and financial assistance for customers in hardship.
- ✓ **Use the latest wireless technology** to collect frequent and accurate readings.

Getting your smart meter

We will do everything we can to fit your meter for you with as little hassle as possible. We aim to fit meters in the pavement, where your stop tap usually is, so you will not need to be at home while we do the work.

Please see our step-by-step guide, so you know what to expect.

Preparation

- 1. We'll call round**

Our team will knock on your door to explain more about your new meter, the next steps and answer any questions you have.
- 2. Reminder**

Before we start any work in your street we will write to you letting you know when we'll be carrying out this work. It may take us several days to fit meters at all homes in your street.

Fitting your meter

We are working closely with your local authority to plan this work and keep any disruption to a minimum.

- 3. The install**

Unless we have booked an appointment with you, you don't need to be in as we aim to fit meters in the pavement or road. We will need to turn your water supply off for around 20 minutes while we do this work. If you are in, we'll let you know first. In some cases, we may need to fit a meter box first, which is a plastic box encasing the meter. We will then return to screw in your meter within a few days.

We may also need to check your supply, which involves a quick test to find the best location to fit your meter. This just involves asking you to check whether water comes out of your tap after we temporarily turn your water off, so we can be sure your meter will only record your water use and not a neighbour's. If we are unable to fit a meter outside your home, we will make an appointment with you to fit your meter under your driveway, garden or inside your home.

We will leave an information pack with you, giving you all the details on your future metered bills and your two-year bill transition.

- 4. Resurfacing**

We'll always ensure the ground where we've fitted your meter is safe and level. As we will be working down the length of your road, we will carry out permanent resurfacing in sections to reduce disruption. This will be carried out within a few days of you getting your meter.

Expert advice

- 5. Free Smarter Home Visit**

Our team will be on hand once your meter is fitted to give you expert advice on how to save water, energy and money. See page 12 for more information about our Smarter Home Visit.

Activating your meter

- 6. Turning your meter on**

We will write to you as soon as your meter is activated. From this point you will be able to monitor your water usage online. We will also send you information about your usage in the post. You will not be moved to a metered bill until two years after your meter has been activated, unless you opt to switch early.

Your two-year transition

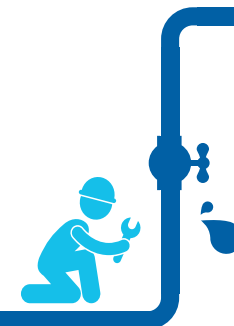
- 7. Two-year adjustment period**

We will send you a series of comparison bills so you know exactly what your metered bill could be. During this time you can go online to view your usage and account.

Your new metered account

- 8. Metered customer**

At the end of the two years, if you haven't already switched you will be transferred to a metered account.



Your two-year adjustment period

Once your meter has been activated, you'll have two years to adjust before you need to pay metered charges – unless you'd like to switch sooner.

During this period, we will send you a series of comparison bills so you can compare your current bill with the amount you could potentially pay on a meter.

This gives you the comfort of knowing your bill doesn't need to change for two years, as well as the information you need to either save money straight away by switching early or take action to save water so you can reduce your bill in the future.

'Take the credit' if you switch within the first year

It's important that we give credit where it's due. If you find your bill would go down, you can switch early and save money. If you switch within the first year, we'll also credit your account with any money you would have saved by switching straight away at the time your meter was activated.

Help if your metered bill would be higher

If you find you are likely to face a higher bill, please don't worry. We can give you lots of advice and support to help reduce your household's water use and therefore your future bills (see page 12 for more details).

Transferring you to a metered charge

If you choose not to switch early, you will receive a letter confirming you have been transferred to your new metered charges two years after your activation date.

To help you adjust to your new meter, you will not be moved on to a metered account until two years after your meter has been activated.



Two-year
adjustment
period

How much can I expect to pay?

Unless you choose to switch early, you will be transferred to a metered account two years after your meter is activated.

Calculating your bill

Your metered bill will be based on how much water you use and wastewater we take away, plus a fixed charge which covers costs including billing, enquiries and surface water and highway drainage.

The table below shows how much water is used during typical household activities and how much it would cost on a meter.

How bills are set

Our regulator, Ofwat, sets price limits on bills every five years, taking into account what our customers are willing and able to pay and the need for us to invest in and improve our network. Our bills are among the lowest of all the water and sewerage companies in England and Wales.

Metered cost for everyday household activities

Activity	Average volume of water (litres)	Total cost* (pence)
Bath	80	16.8
Four-minute shower	40	8.4
Four-minute power shower	80	16.8
Running tap (per minute)	6	1.3
Normal toilet flush	7	1.5
Dual flush toilet (full flush)	6	1.3
One-hour garden sprinkler or hosepipe	540	113.4
Washing machine	55	11.5
Eco washing machine	35	7.3
Standard dishwasher	20	4.2
Eco dishwasher	10	2.1

*Figures taken from 2016/17 charges

Your metered bill

The table below will help give you an indication of what your annual metered bill could be. You can get a more accurate understanding of how much water you use with our online calculator. Just visit thameswater.co.uk/savings.

Average annual metered charges for 2016/17

Typical usage	Number of occupants					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Low						
Away from the house most of the day and only use the washing machine occasionally. Take short showers instead of baths.	£169	£242	£290	£330	£379	£433
Average						
Use washing machine and dishwasher most days and take showers with the occasional bath.	£209	£311	£381	£431	£496	£568
High						
Use water frequently throughout the day including daily baths or use of a power shower. Use washing machine every day and regularly use a sprinkler or hose.	£246	£372	£372	£458	£587	£662

Extra bill support

We understand that, despite best efforts to use less water, for some customers bills will go up. We have a range of support available from spreading bills and arrears into affordable amounts to a new tariff to support customers in hardship.

If you are finding it hard to pay your water bill let us try to help. Find out more at thameswater.co.uk/help-paying or by calling us on 0800 980 8800.

Independent advice

You can seek free, independent advice from organisations such as Citizens Advice, StepChange Debt Charity and the National Debtline.

Extra care services

We offer literature in large print and braille, talking bills, a doorstep password scheme and language line interpreters.

Savings made simple

Using less water will save you money on your metered water bill, but many people don't realise that using less hot water could save you even more money on your energy bills.

Heating water for showers, baths and washing-up accounts for almost a quarter of the average annual heating bill.

To help you reduce the amount of water you use, you can order free water-saving gadgets from us.

Money-saving freebies



Showers

Showers are often the biggest water user in the home. By fitting a free efficient showerhead, a family of four could save up to £97 off their annual water and energy bill.



Shower timer

Challenge yourself to shower within four minutes. Just cutting your shower time by one minute a day could save a family of four up to £52 off their annual metered water and energy bills.



Toilets

Almost a quarter of our home's water use goes down the loo and old single flush toilets use nine litres of water every flush. A save-a-flush bag could save a family of four one litre every flush and up to £18 off their annual water bill.



Kitchen swivel tap

This will save one litre of water per minute, without reducing pressure. A family of four could save up to £16 off their annual metered water and energy bill.



For more tips on ways to save water go to thameswater.co.uk/savings

Money-saving calculator

Our online calculator will help you work out how much water and energy you use and how much money you could save by using less.

The calculator adds up all the water you use at home and in the garden and suggests easy ways you can reduce your water and energy bills.

The screenshot shows a 3D rendering of a bathroom with a bathtub, sink, and toilet. A blue pop-up window titled 'Bath' asks 'How many baths does your household take per week?' with a slider set to 7. Below it, it asks 'Do you fill the bath up every time you use it?' with 'Yes' and 'No' radio buttons. A 'Back' button and a 'Next' button are at the bottom of the pop-up. To the right, a summary box shows: WATER COST £ 467.00, ENERGY COST £ 592.00, and TOTAL COST £ 1059.00. At the bottom of the interface, there are three digital displays: WATER USAGE 190892 (L), ENERGY USAGE 006419 (kWh), and CARBON EMISSIONS 003145 (Kg).



To use our money-saving calculator go to thameswater.co.uk/savings

Sign up for your free Smarter Home Visit

Our team of experts can help you save water, energy and money.

Once you have your meter, our team will be on hand to offer you a free Smarter Home Visit, which includes fitting the latest water-saving devices around your home and giving you expert advice to help you save money.

Just one short visit (30-60 mins) will help ensure you get the most from your smart meter, while helping you reduce your water and energy bills.



Get the latest water-saving devices professionally fitted around your home

Our free products could help you cut your home's water use by up to a quarter.



Find out how to make the most of your smart meter

We'll explain how your metered bill is calculated and how you can monitor your water use.



Get expert advice on saving water, energy and money

We'll explain how you can reduce your energy bills by saving water.



Get a free benefits entitlement check and debt advice

If you are in financial hardship, we can arrange free advice to ensure you are getting everything you are entitled to and the right support.



Free Smarter Home Visit

Your questions answered

Getting my smart meter

Do I have to pay for my meter to be fitted?

No.

I've been told in the past it is not possible to fit a meter at my property. Is this still the case?

It isn't always possible to fit a water meter at homes where external pipework is shared with a neighbour and there is nowhere suitable to attach the meter inside. If you have requested a meter in the past (over a year ago) but were unable to have one fitted, we will revisit your home and look again to see if we can find a solution.

What happens if you cannot fit a water meter at my property?

If we are unable to fit a meter at your property, we will move you on to a fixed tariff after two years which reflects the number of bedrooms in your property or if you live alone. If this tariff is cheaper than your current charge, you can go on it straight away.

How secure is the data collected from my smart meter?

All consumption data collected from your meter will be kept on our secure database, where your account details are currently and in compliance with the Data Protection Act. It will not be shared with any third parties who are not working on our behalf.

What happens if I have a leak at my property?

If you have a leak on your supply pipe (which runs from the boundary to the point it enters your property), we can fix this free of charge* and correct your bill.

Are smart meters safe?

Our meters comply with UK legislation and several million have been installed globally. They are low powered and use less power than a mobile phone or your home wi-fi.

Can I request for my meter to be fitted inside my home instead of in the pavement?

No, we will always aim to fit the meter in the pavement first, as it is the only way we can understand if you have a leak on your outside pipework. It is also easier to access if we need to maintain it in the future.

I'm concerned about the impact of fitting a meter inside my property.

We will always aim to fit meters in the pavement or road. If this isn't possible, we will need an appointment with you to look for an alternative location beneath your driveway, garden or inside your home. Once we've completed our work, we will return the area to its original condition.

How is my unmetered bill currently worked out?

Unmetered customers currently pay their bill based on the rateable value of their property. This is an old system, introduced before council tax banding, which can differ significantly between properties. All new homes built since 1989 have been fitted with meters.

*Subject to terms and conditions

Monitoring my consumption

I don't have access to the internet but I still want to monitor my water consumption.

When we send you your bill we will be able to let you know exactly how much water you are using. If we notice any unusual activity between bills, such as a large spike in water use or water constantly going through the meter which usually indicates a leak, we will get in touch with you so we can investigate. You can also call us to find out about your usage.

Progressive metering programme

Why are you only starting to fit water meters now?

The Government approved plans to install water meters progressively across our region in June 2012. Since this time we have been planning the most effective way to roll this programme out.

Do I have to have a meter?

Yes. Due to real concerns about the lack of water in London and the Thames Valley, we have legal powers to fit smart water meters at all properties on a progressive basis. Our powers to install meters can be found in section 162 of the Water Industry Act 1991, which grants permission for water companies to meter domestic premises on a compulsory basis in areas which have been determined by the Secretary of State to be of serious water stress (this includes our region).

Will everyone be put on a meter?

Not straight away. This is a large programme of works and we need to carry it out at a sensible pace, targeting the areas where we can be most effective first. Our plan is to meter all property connections by 2030.

Will you make more money as a result of installing meters?

No. Switching our customers to meters will not increase either our income or our profits. For some customers bills will increase, while for others bills will fall. Any unintended increase would be returned to customers through lower bills.

Are other people across the country getting water meters?

Yes. Neighbouring water companies, including Southern Water and South East Water, have already started metering all their customers. They have found that 60 per cent of customers have either benefited financially or have seen their bills stay the same from paying on a water meter straight away.

How to get in touch with us



0800 316 0989

We are open weekdays 8am-8pm and Saturday 8am-1pm

Textphone: 0800 072 1087



[thameswater.co.uk/mymeter](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/mymeter)



Thames Water, PO Box 286,
Swindon SN38 9RA

If unsure don't open the door

All our staff and contractors carry identification badges. If you want to check that someone works for us, please call us so we can confirm their identity. Our team will be happy to wait while you do this.

You can also call us to sign up for our doorstep password scheme.