

## **Collection of Charges – Household Customers**

### **Paying for Water Services**

Cholderton and District Water Company provides high quality water to customers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Water services must be paid for promptly. We appreciate the difficulties some customers may face paying bills and we will do all that we can to agree the most suitable method of payment.

This document explains how we can help. It also sets out to explain what will happen if you do not pay. Please contact us if you have payment difficulties as prompt action allows us to help you. Our office is open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday and the telephone number is: 01980 629203.

### **Responsibility for Payment of Charges**

The occupant(s) of a premise will be the person(s) responsible for making payment of water service charges unless a separate agreement has been made with the Company.

### **What happens if you are a tenant?**

If you live in rented accommodation, it is not always easy to see who is legally responsible for the bill. Our water charges have to be paid and this is usually by the person who lives in the property and uses the water. Check your tenancy agreement. If your landlord is responsible for the bill and owing to his non-payment we start to take recovery action against you, or if the bill is for a previous tenant please call us straight away on 01980 629203 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

### **How Can We Help?**

Whilst we cannot reduce the amount you have to pay, we will always advise you of the payment options available to you. It is important for you to contact us without delay if you are having difficulties in making your payment. We can only help if we are aware of your difficulties.

If you have low water usage (for example if you live on your own or if you live in a high rateable value property) it may be possible for you to reduce the amount of your

water bill by opting to have water supplied through a water meter. For further information on this free service, please contact us on 01980 629203.

If you contact us, we will always try to reach a mutually acceptable payment arrangement with you. This will be based on clearing the annual bill within the financial year plus a reducing any arrears figure. This ensures that the debt will progressively reduce over an agreed period of time.

If you find it difficult to make a payment to us because of illness or disability, we can arrange for one of our representatives to collect the payment at your home.

If you are in receipt of Income Support, income-based jobseeker's allowance or pension credit it may be possible for the Department of Work and Pensions to arrange payments directly to us. For further information, contact your local Department for Work and Pensions. If you are awaiting a decision regarding third party deductions you must advise us so that we can ensure that the charges recovery process is put on hold whilst you are in contact with the DWP.

The Company operates a Vulnerable Group Tariff for those qualifying customers where the property is supplied through a meter. This tariff could help reduce your water charges. Customers must satisfy certain conditions to qualify for this tariff, details of which are available by contacting the office on 01980 629203.

If you would prefer independent advice, you can contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), who will work with us to sort out your debt for water services and provide advice in managing your financial affairs. The telephone number for your local CAB can be found in the telephone directory.

Further support and assistance can be found by contacting the Social Services Department of your local authority. The telephone number can be found in the telephone directory.

## **Payment Options**

The charge for water supplies other than through a meter is due six monthly in advance. You can pay the bill as follows:

- One payment – in full.
- Two payments.
- Monthly instalments.
- Weekly payments.

## **How to Pay**

- Payment can be made directly to the Company's bank account by standing order  
Lloyds TSB Bank plc  
38 Blue Boar Row  
Salisbury, Wilts SP1 1DB

Account number: 0351582. Sort Code: 30 97 41

If you take this option, please ask the bank to quote your customer ID number which will be found on your invoice.

- Payments can be made over the counter at Shipton Bellinger Post Office. You may leave cash or cheques. Please place your payment in an envelope with your customer ID number on the front. Please put your ID number on the back of cheques at all times.
- Payments may be brought to the office which can be found on the farm yard at Cholderton Estate. On entering the farm yard drive in about 100 yards, take a track to the left and the office is located in a cream coloured bungalow at the top of the track.
- Instalment plans can be set up, please telephone the office for details.

## **Action We Will Take Upon Non Payment**

If you do not pay your water bill or keep to an agreed instalment arrangement, we will take a number of steps prior to taking legal action.

- If payment is not received by a due date, we will issue a 'reminder notice' asking you to bring the account up to date within the next 14 days.
- If you do not respond to the reminder notice, we will issue a 'final reminder notice'.
- If you do not respond to the 'final reminder notice' we will then issue you a notice warning of impending legal action unless payment in full or part is received within a specified date.
- Before any further action is taken we will attempt to make further contact prior to issuing a County Court Claim. This contact will be by one or more of the following means:
  - . Telephone
  - . Home visit
  - . Letter
- Should this final attempt fail to result in payment or an agreed payment plan a County Court Claim will be instigated within 28 days.

## County Court Action

If we take legal action through the County Court you will incur any additional costs that this action entails.

If you do not pay the full amount of a Claim issued by the County Court within 28 days or apply for settlement by instalments, we will apply for judgement to be lodged against you.

### **THIS WILL AFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO OBTAIN CREDIT IN THE FUTURE.**

If you do not pay the account in full after the judgement has been obtained, we will normally ask the Court to enforce judgement. This can involve any of the following:

- Requesting you attend Court for an “Oral Examination” to answer questions about your financial affairs.
- Issuing a “Warrant” for seizure of goods.
- Applying for an “Attachment of Earnings”.
- Obtaining a “Charging Order against the sale of your property

**REMEMBER** – You can contact our office on 01980 629203 for advice between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

## If You Dispute Your Bill

If you dispute the amount of your bill or you do not think you are liable for the charges, you must tell us immediately and we will investigate the matter. While our enquiries are going on your account will be placed on hold and no further collection proceedings will take place. This is also the case should you seek advice from an independent body such as the CAB or Social Services. The nearest CAB is in Amesbury. Their telephone number is 01980 622696. However, if we are still unable to agree, and mutually resolve the matter, we can refer your case to The Consumer Council for Water Wessex who will investigate the dispute independently. They can be contacted at:

The Consumer Council for Water Wessex  
2 The Hide Market  
West Street  
St Philips  
Bristol BS2 0BH

Telephone: 0117 955 7001 or lo-call 0845 7078268  
Fax: 0117 955 7037  
E-mail: [wessex@ccwater.org.uk](mailto:wessex@ccwater.org.uk)

The Consumer Council for Water Wessex represents the customers' viewpoint to the companies serving the Wessex Region, to OFWAT and the Government. They press for improved standards in all aspects of company's customer service, including the handling of complaints. Customers – household, business and others – look to The Consumer Council for Water Wessex for independent advice, information and help in resolving problems.

## **How to Contact Us**

Address: Cholderton & District Water Company  
Estate Office, Cholderton, Salisbury,  
Wiltshire SP4 0DR  
Telephone: 01980 629203  
Fax: 01980 629307  
E-mail: [admin@cholderton-estate.co.uk](mailto:admin@cholderton-estate.co.uk)

## **Complaints**

If you have a complaint about our service we expect you to contact us. You should write to the Company Secretary at the above address.

25 April 2010

