

Awareness

FAQs for Waltham Forest Council housing tenants who had water provided by Thames Water

What's happening?

The charge for your water and wastewater was paid directly to us and we paid Thames Water for this service. This arrangement changed from 30th September 2019 when we stopped charging you for water and wastewater services and instead, Thames Water started to bill you directly.

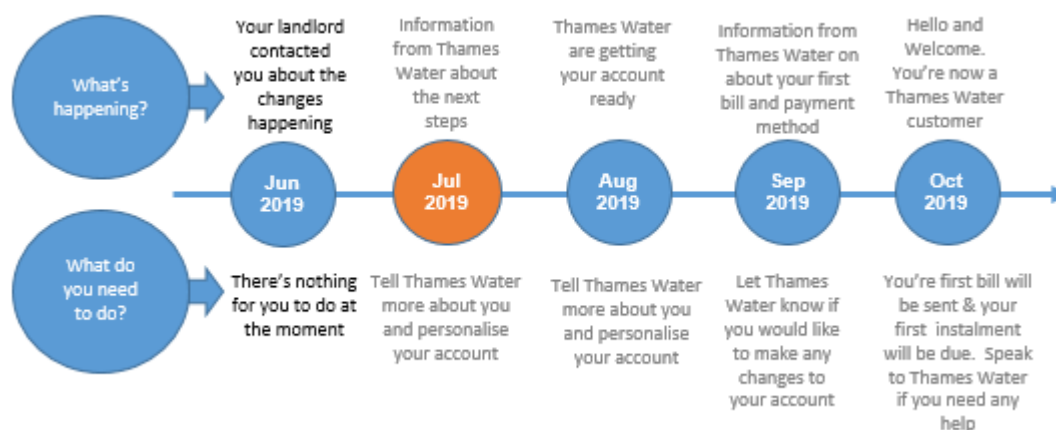
General questions

Why is it happening?

We have received written notice from Thames Water informing us of the termination of this agreement as they believe it's important for them to have a direct relationship with as many customers as possible so they can offer additional support to vulnerable customers and offer alternative tariffs where appropriate.

How does this change affect me?

As part of the transition, we'll securely share your name and address details only with Thames Water so that they can start sending bills to you from September. They will also contact you to tell you more about what will happen and when.



How many other residents does this transition affect? Is it just me?

The transition is also affecting residents who live in other local authority or housing association properties.

Can I choose a different water supplier?

Currently household residential customers are unable to choose their water supplier in England, this is fixed by geographical boundary.

Can I choose to opt out of the direct billing transition and continue to pay for my water charges with my rent?

You won't be able to opt out of the transition to direct billing because we will no longer have an agreement with Thames Water to collect on their behalf.

I have a cesspit/septic tank/I pay another provider for my waste services. What does this mean for my bill?

If you have a cess pit or septic tank, you'll continue to use this for your waste and only pay Thames Water for your water charges. If you pay another provider for your waste services, you'll continue to do this and only pay Thames Water for your water charges

Billing Questions

How much will my bill be?

Thames Water will send your bill and instalment amounts in September 2019 before your first payment is due in October.

Can I have my bill now?

Your water rates are being collected along with your rent until 30th September 2019 so you are not responsible for paying your water charges to Thames Water bill until then.

When is my first payment due?

You first payment won't be due until October. You'll receive your bill in plenty of time which will tell you how much and when your first instalment will be.

How can I pay Thames Water bills?

Once you receive your letter from Thames Water in July, you can request a payment method and frequency that best suits you, as your new account will be set up. They'll send you a Direct Debit form and give you guidance on how to set this up online. You can choose to do nothing, and instead, Thames Water will send you a monthly payment plan and a PayPoint card as well as guidance on where to make payments.

Can I set up a direct debit now?

Thames Water will contact you in July 2019 when they are ready to accept your bank details. They'll send you a paper Direct Debit form and give you details on how to set one up online.

Will you charge me more for paying by direct debit?

Your Thames Water bill amount for the remainder of year (Oct –March) is simply divided by 6 and then due by the payment method you chose - there's no difference in the overall amount if you pay this way. Once it's set up you no longer have to worry about forgetting to make payments

How often will I be billed by Thames Water?

Thames Water produce bills annually, usually in February/March however, your first bill covers the period from 1st October 2019 to 31st March 2020. Your second bill will be sent in February/March 2020 for the period 1st April 2020-31st March 2021. Thames Water will spread your bill over monthly instalments, so you are not expected to pay your bills in one lump sum.

Can I start paying Thames Water early?

You're still in agreement with to pay your water charges to us until 30th September 2019. Once you're directly billed by Thames Water in October, you'll be able to start paying Thames Water.

What happens if I miss a payment?

If you miss a payment, you will be in arrears (i.e. behind on your payments). If you continue to miss payments and don't get in touch with Thames Water, they will begin debt collection activities and it may affect your credit rating. If you feel you will struggle to pay please contact Thames Water before you miss a payment so they can understand your situation and help you.

If you need assistance in this matter, you can contact Housing rents by email on rents@walthamforest.gov.uk or call 0208 496 4197

Affordability Questions

I know in advance I can't pay – what happens next?

Thames water understands that having a new bill to pay can be worrying and they want to help you if you feel it will be a struggle to pay. Thames Water has a number of affordability options, and can assist with payment methods/frequency in order for you to manage your bills going forward. There will be more information in your letter in January.

Can I apply for a water meter?

Thames Water will contact you in July 2019 at which point you will be able to go through this in more detail once you become a direct customer.

Priority Services Questions

Do you provide extra care services, e.g. large print, braille etc.?

Thames Water offer a number of free services for customers who have sight problems, so please let them know if you would like extra help. Thames Water will ask you if you'd like more information about these services when they contact you in July.

I'm registered as disabled/have a medical condition

Thames Water want to know who you are if you need their help and can include you in their Priority services register. Thames Water will ask you if you'd like more information about these services when they contact you in July.