

# Swamped by your water bill?



## Your neighbours switched to a water meter and saved money

In the Autumn of 2015, the City Council started a project to switch a number of residents on to water meters. One resident who we helped lives in a flat on Cockerell Road. Do read below to learn a little about her, how the meter was installed and how much she is now saving.

Most people pay for water in one of two ways:

1. using the rateable value of the property they live in
2. using the amount actually used as displayed on a water meter

If you do not have a water meter, you will be paying a fixed amount regardless of how much water you use. If you don't use a lot of water, you may be still be paying quite a lot of money.

Address: Cockerell Road

Property: studio flat

Number in household: 1 adult

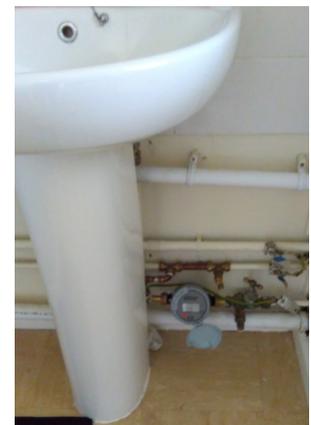


In Cambridge, Cambridge Water Company supplies our clean water. We also pay them for the removal of waste water. Water meters can only be installed by Cambridge Water (using their chosen plumbers) and the meters are the property of the water company.

Properties built before 1990 will not necessarily have water meters fitted. But it is free to have one fitted (in most situations) and they can be put into all types of properties. This resident was referred to us, as being on a very low income she had difficulties paying her bills. We were confident that if a water meter could be installed - which is not always possible in blocks of flats - she would save money as she lives by herself and is out at work a lot.

A water meter was requested by phoning Cambridge Water's customer services. They put us through to the plumbing company to book an appointment - just a couple of weeks later. At this appointment the plumber explained that even though the property was in a block of flats, he would be able to fit a meter. It would be fitted in the bathroom and this would be done for free.

Installing the water meter took about an hour. During this time the water had to be turned off, and there was a little smoke from soldering the pipes. The plumber then explained to the resident how to read the meter. Although the meter is easy to read, in order to calculate her bill Cambridge Water do visit every six months and read it from outside the flat (using wireless technology), so the resident does not actually need to do this herself.



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Within a couple of weeks, the resident had received a new bill from Cambridge Water. This confirmed that she was now on a water meter and showed an actual reading - Cambridge Water had already taken a reading to make the adjustments.

Based on how much water the resident has used in the first 9 months, we have estimated that she will save around £240 per year. This is a significant saving - nearly 60% less than she would have been charged using water rates even in such a small flat.

We are continuing to monitor her water use - taking readings every month - so we have a clear record of how much money she will save in a year. We have also given her hints and tips on how to save water, and shown her the free water saving devices she can get from Cambridge Water.



The resident said:

*“It’s really easy to switch and I am so happy I am paying less money. It is a big saving for me.”*

You can apply to Cambridge Water to have a water meter if:

- \* you pay the water bills and live in your own home or a rented home
- \* you pay for water based on the rateable value of your property or assessed rates
- \* you live in a house or a flat

You can opt to switch back to paying water rates if you are not saving money on a water meter, as long as you inform Cambridge Water within 1 year of the meter being installed.

**You should save money on a water meter if there are 1 or 2 people in the household and you may save money if there are 3 - especially if you are careful with how much water you use.**

**Once you have a water meter, you may be eligible for special tariffs from Cambridge Water if you have certain medical conditions or you are on particular benefits.**

Contact Cambridge Water on 01223-706050 to switch to a water meter. Or if you would like our help, please contact Philippa or Elizabeth on 01223-457676 or email us at philippa.hughes@cambridge.gov.uk or elizabeth.bruce@cambridge.gov.uk

For more information go to:

<http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/customers/water-in-the-home>

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/reducing-water-use>

<http://www.waterwise.org.uk/pages/how-to-save-water.html>