



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 Wadloes Road. Do read below to learn a little about him, how the meter was installed and how much he 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.

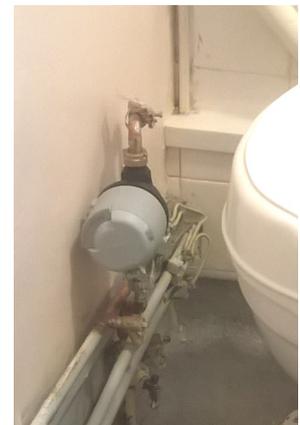
Address: Wadloes Road
Property: 2-bedroom flat
Number in household: 1 adult



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 he had difficulties paying his water bills. We were confident that if a water meter could be installed - which can be complicated for some flats - he would save money as he lives by himself.

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 two water meters would be required - one for hot and one for the cold supply - due to the plumbing system in this property. This is unusual but not a problem and was still done for free. Both meters can be easily read by the resident, but as Cambridge Water do visit and read them from outside the flat (using wireless technology), the resident does not need to do this himself.



Installing the water meters took just over 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, and that Cambridge Water would take readings every six months in order to calculate his bill.

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Within a couple of weeks, the resident had received a new bill from Cambridge Water. This confirmed that he 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 he will save over £250 per year. This is a significant saving - nearly 60% less than he would have been charged using water rates.

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



The resident said:

“Having the meters fitted has been a godsend! Saving on bills is a great relief.”

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>