



Water Industry Act 1991

1991 CHAPTER 56

PART V

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

CHAPTER I

CHARGES

Manner of fixing charges

144 Liability of occupiers etc. for charges.

- (1) Subject to the following provisions of this section and except in so far as provision to the contrary is made by any agreement to which the undertaker is a party—
 - (a) supplies of water provided by a water undertaker shall be treated for the purposes of this Chapter as services provided to the occupiers for the time being of any premises supplied; and
 - (b) sewerage services provided by a sewerage undertaker shall be treated for the purposes of this Chapter as provided to the occupiers for the time being of any premises which—
 - (i) are drained by a sewer or drain connecting, either directly or through an intermediate sewer or drain, with such a public sewer of the undertaker as is provided for foul water or surface water or both; or
 - (ii) are premises the occupiers of which have, in respect of the premises, the benefit of facilities which drain to a sewer or drain so connecting.
- (2) Subject to subsection (3) below, charges which, under the preceding provisions of this Chapter, are fixed in relation to any premises by reference to volume may be imposed so that a person is made liable in relation to those premises to pay charges for services provided by a relevant undertaker after that person has ceased to be the occupier of the premises.

Changes to legislation: Water Industry Act 1991, Section 144 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 14 August 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

- (3) A person shall not be made liable by virtue of subsection (2) above for any charges fixed in relation to any premises by any relevant undertaker, except where—
- (a) he fails to inform the undertaker of the ending of his occupation of the premises at least two working days before he ceases to occupy them; and
 - (b) the charges are in respect of a period ending no later than with the first relevant day.
- (4) For the purposes of subsection (3) above, “the first relevant day”, in relation to a case in which a person has ceased to be the occupier of any premises in relation to which charges are fixed by a relevant undertaker, means whichever of the following first occurs after he ceases to occupy the premises, that is to say—
- (a) where that person informs the undertaker of the ending of his occupation of the premises less than two working days before, or at any time after, he ceases to occupy them, the twenty-eighth day after he so informs the undertaker;
 - (b) any day on which any meter would normally have been read in order for the amount of the charges to be determined;
 - (c) any day on which any other person informs the undertaker that he has become the new occupier of the premises.
- (5) Where—
- (a) any person who is the occupier of any premises to which a supply of water is provided by a water undertaker has served notice on the undertaker for the purposes of section 62 above; and
 - (b) that notice is given otherwise than in connection with that person’s ceasing to be the occupier of the premises in a case in which provision is made by virtue of subsection (2) above for a person who has ceased to be the occupier of the premises to be made liable for any charges,
- then, notwithstanding that that person continues to be the occupier of those premises, he shall not be liable to the undertaker (otherwise than in pursuance of a demand for a supply made since the service of the notice) for any charges in respect of any supply of water to those premises after the appropriate time.
- (6) In subsection (5) above “the appropriate time”, in relation to a case in which a notice has been served for the purposes of section 62 above, means whichever is the later of—
- (a) the expiry of the notice; and
 - (b) the end of the period of two working days beginning with the service of the notice.
- (7) In this section any reference to two working days is a reference to a period of forty-eight hours calculated after disregarding any time falling on—
- (a) a Saturday or Sunday; or
 - (b) Christmas Day, Good Friday or any day which is a bank holiday in England and Wales under the ^{M1}Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971.
- (8) Where, in the case of any premises—
- (a) the person who was liable, immediately before 1st September 1989, to pay charges in respect of a supply of water to those premises was the owner of those premises, rather than the occupier;
 - (b) that person was so liable (under section 54 of Schedule 3 to the ^{M2}Water Act 1945 or any other local statutory provision) otherwise than by virtue of an agreement; and

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(c) the person who was in fact the occupier of the premises on that date has not ceased to be the occupier before the coming into force of this Act, then the person who is the owner from time to time of those premises shall continue, until the person mentioned in paragraph (c) above does cease to be the occupier of the premises, to be the person liable and, accordingly, shall be treated for the purposes of this section as if he were the occupier of the premises.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 S. 144 applied (with modifications) (28.6.2013) by [The Water Industry \(Specified Infrastructure Projects\) \(English Undertakers\) Regulations 2013 \(S.I. 2013/1582\)](#), reg. 1(1)(b), **Sch. 1 para. 11(3)** (with reg. 1(1)(c)) (as amended (31.3.2017) by [The Water Act 2014 \(Consequential Amendments etc.\) Order 2017 \(S.I. 2017/506\)](#), arts. 1(1), **30(12)(e)**)

Marginal Citations

M1 1971 c. 80.

M2 1945 c. 42.

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- Pt. 3 Ch. 2B inserted by [2014 c. 21 s. 12](#)
- s. 14B(6) inserted by [2024 c. 13 Sch. 30 para. 12\(4\)](#)
- s. 16B(11) inserted by [2024 c. 13 Sch. 30 para. 13\(4\)](#)
- s. 17(2)(aa) inserted by S.I. 2019/93, Sch. 1 para. 4(4)(b) (as substituted) by S.I. [2019/1245 reg. 21](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. The affecting statutory instrument has no legal effect. It was made under a procedure which meant that it ceased to have effect 28 days after signing unless it was debated and approved in Parliament within that time. It was not debated and approved within 28 days, so it has expired with no effect.)
- s. 17A(c) repealed by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 4\(2\)\(c\)](#)
- s. 17A(d) repealed by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 4\(2\)\(c\)](#)
- s. 17A(2)(ba) and word inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 4\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 17M(6) inserted by [2024 c. 13 Sch. 30 para. 14\(4\)](#)
- s. 17Q(11) inserted by [2024 c. 13 Sch. 30 para. 15\(4\)](#)
- s. 17R(2)(aa) inserted by S.I. 2019/93, Sch. 1 para. 4(7)(b) (as substituted) by S.I. [2019/1245 reg. 21](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. The affecting statutory instrument has no legal effect. It was made under a procedure which meant that it ceased to have effect 28 days after signing unless it was debated and approved in Parliament within that time. It was not debated and approved within 28 days, so it has expired with no effect.)
- s. 17AA(1)(ba)(bb) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 5\(2\)](#)
- s. 17BA(5A) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 7\(3\)](#)
- s. 17HA(9)(b)(ia) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 16\(2\)](#)
- s. 23(2AA) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 7 para. 35\(4\)](#)
- s. 23(8)(9) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 7 para. 35\(10\)](#)
- s. 31(10) inserted by [2024 c. 13 Sch. 29 para. 12](#)
- s. 39E-39H inserted by [2021 c. 30 s. 78\(7\)](#)
- s. 87(7C)-(7F) inserted by [2012 c. 7 s. 35\(6\)](#)
- s. 94A-94E inserted by [2021 c. 30 s. 79](#)
- s. 95ZA(6) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 39\(4\)](#)
- s. 96ZA(2)-(5) substituted for s. 96ZA(2) by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 40](#)
- s. 106B(3A) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 7 para. 94](#)
- s. 117G(2)(aa) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 41\(2\)](#)
- s. 117G(4)-(4D) substituted for s. 117(4) by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 41\(3\)](#)
- s. 117G(6)(aa) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 41\(4\)](#)
- s. 117K(2)(aa) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 42\(2\)](#)
- s. 117K(5)(5A) substituted for s. 117(5) by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 42\(3\)](#)
- s. 117L(9) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 43\(3\)](#)
- s. 117N(4)(aa) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 45\(2\)](#)
- s. 117N(8)(aa) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 45\(3\)](#)
- s. 117N(11)(aa) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 45\(4\)](#)
- s. 117O(4)(aa) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 46\(2\)](#)
- s. 117O(8)(aa) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 46\(3\)](#)
- s. 117S(7)-(9) inserted by [2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 49](#)
- s. 119(2)(ab) inserted by [2003 c. 37 s. 89\(1\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 119(3) inserted by [2003 c. 37 s. 89\(1\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 121(1)(ba) inserted by [2003 c. 37 s. 89\(2\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 141DC inserted by [2021 c. 30 s. 83](#)

- s. 177K(7)(aa) inserted by 2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 42(4)
- s. 207D and cross-heading inserted by 2014 c. 21 s. 39
- s. 207D(5) word repealed by 2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 52(a)
- s. 207D(5) words inserted by 2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 52(b)
- s. 213(1ZA) inserted by 2014 c. 21 Sch. 7 para. 119(3)
- s. 213(1ZA) repealed by 2014 c. 21 Sch. 5 para. 53