
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2008 No. 594

**The Water Supply and Sewerage Services
(Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008**

Complaints, account queries and requests about payment arrangements

- 7.—(1) This regulation applies where a customer of a relevant undertaker—
- (a) complains in writing about the supply of water or the provision of sewerage services by the undertaker;
 - (b) queries, in writing, the correctness of an account for the supply of water or the provision of sewerage services; or
 - (c) asks, in writing, for a change to payment arrangements.
- (2) The undertaker must provide a substantive reply to the customer—
- (a) in the cases of a reply to a complaint or a query, within 10 working days; or
 - (b) if the request is for a change to payment arrangements and the request cannot be met, within 5 working days.
- (3) The first day of the period for reply is the day after the day when the undertaker receives the complaint, query or request.
- (4) Subject to paragraph (6), if the undertaker does not comply with paragraph (2), it must pay the customer £20.
- (5) No application by the customer for the payment is necessary.
- (6) However, the undertaker need not pay the customer under paragraph (4) if—
- (a) the address that the customer wrote to was not a notified address of the undertaker for a complaint, query or request of that kind;
 - (b) the customer does not wish to pursue the complaint, query, or request and has so informed the undertaker;
 - (c) it was impracticable for the undertaker to send a reply within the required period because of—
 - (i) industrial action by employees of the undertaker; or
 - (ii) the act or default of a person who is not—
 - (aa) an officer, employee or agent of the undertaker; or
 - (bb) a person acting on behalf of the undertaker or of an agent of the undertaker;or
 - (d) in the case of a reply to a complaint or query—
 - (i) the complaint or query was frivolous or vexatious; or
 - (ii) the undertaker reasonably considered that a visit was necessary before replying, and severe weather made that visit impracticable.

(7) For the purposes of paragraph (6)(a), an address of an undertaker is a notified address of the undertaker for a complaint, query or request of a particular kind if the undertaker has notified that address to its customers as the appropriate address for a complaint, query or request of that kind by—

- (a) publishing it in a telephone directory;
- (b) notifying it on the undertaker’s website; or
- (c) showing it on the undertaker’s publicity material.

(8) For the purposes of this regulation—

- (a) “undertaker” includes a service provider that is carrying out sewerage functions on behalf of an undertaker under arrangements entered into, or to be treated as entered into, for the purposes of section 97 of the WIA; and
- (b) a complaint, query or request to such a service provider is taken, for the purposes of paragraph (2), to have been received by the undertaker on whose behalf the service provider provides services on the date on which the undertaker received it from the service provider.

(9) In this regulation—

“payment arrangements” means the arrangements by which a customer makes payments (including instalment payments) to the undertaker; and

“a change to payment arrangements” includes a change to the frequency of payments (including instalment payments).