

Complaint handling Code of Practice



Contact details

If you have any questions or need more information please contact us.

Web: **www.water.ie**

Twitter: **@IWCare**

Email: **customerservice@water.ie**

Address: **Irish Water, PO Box 448
South City Delivery Office
Cork City**

Account information or account enquiries

9am-5.30pm, Mon-Fri

Telephone: **0818 778 778** or **+353 1 707 2827**

ITRS: **1800 378 378** (for hard of hearing customers)

Water supply queries and emergencies

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Telephone: **1800 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**

ITRS: **1800 378 378** (for hard of hearing customers)

This publication is available in Braille, in audio on CD and in large text format on request by calling 1800 278 278.

Safeguarding our water for our future

December 2021

Introduction

Irish Water is responsible for providing and managing public water and wastewater services on a national basis. At Irish Water we are committed to delivering excellent customer service. This Code of Practice gives information and advice on how you can make a complaint with us, and how you can expect us to respond to your complaint.

If you are unhappy with any part of our service, we encourage you to let us know and we will do everything we can to resolve the matter quickly and to your satisfaction. We aim to resolve all complaints as quickly and as fairly as possible. We monitor complaints to help us to improve the quality of our service.

We also have a Code of Practice for vulnerable customers, billing, communications, metering and network operations. You can request a copy by calling us on: **1800 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828** or you can visit **www.water.ie**

References in this Code of Practice to water services include the public water and wastewater services that we provide.

Our promise to you

- **Complaints information**

We will make customers aware of this Code of Practice and on request, we will issue you with a copy;

- **Easy complaints process**

We will provide you, or a person you name to act on your behalf, with a clear and easy process to make a complaint.

We will try to resolve all complaints as soon as possible.

Irish Water has a two-stage process for resolving customer complaints. These include the initial stage and the escalation stage.

Stage 1: Irish Water Initial Complaints Process

- **Response within five working days**

We will respond to your complaint within five working days with a resolution or an outline plan on how we will resolve the issue, under normal conditions;

- **Update on or before 10th working day**

You will receive an update on your complaint on or before the 10th working day, if it has not already been resolved;

- **Explain problems**

We will explain the issue to you and where relevant, apologise if we make a mistake. In some circumstances you may be entitled to a charter payment – please see our ‘Domestic Customer Charter’ for further information. Please find this information at www.water.ie/about/our-customer-commitment/;

- **Decision within two months**

You will receive a final decision to Stage 1 of our complaints process within two months (you may be required to engage with us during the investigation, e.g. we might require access to your premises).

Stage 2: Irish Water Escalation Complaints Process

- **Clear way to escalate your complaint**

We will make it clear how you can escalate your complaint further within Irish Water if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint;

- **Decision on escalation within 10 working days**

We will review your escalated complaint and will provide a response within 10 working days (unless a site visit/operational works is required and, in these instances, we will advise you of why these instances may take longer and agree with you of the likely timeframe);

- **Empathy and confidentiality**

We will treat your complaint with empathy and confidentiality;

- **Trained staff**

We will train our staff to deliver on the promises we make in this Code of Practice;

- **Monitored service**

We will monitor and measure the service we give and make sure we keep our promises.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined as “the expression (through various channels, for example letter, email, phone call, physical claim) of a customer’s dissatisfaction and his/her explicit expectation for a response or resolution”.

The term “explicit” denotes that the customer state they are seeking some action to address their concern, even if they are not able to identify and state what action is required.

For clarity, a customer in this context is defined as any person that wishes to complain to or about Irish Water.

How to make a complaint:

If you are unhappy with any service or contact with us, please let us know and we will do our best to rectify the situation as quickly as possible. You may also be entitled to a charter payment in certain circumstances as per our 'Domestic Customer Charter' at www.water.ie/about/our-customer-commitment/. You can register a complaint with us in any of the following ways:

Post: **Irish Water**
PO Box 860
South City Delivery Office
Cork City

Web: **www.water.ie**

Email: **customerservice@water.ie**

Twitter: **@IWCare**

Telephone: **1800 278 278** or **+353 1 707 2828**

Charter payments

If we fail to meet any of the commitments as outlined in our 'Irish Water Customer Charter', you will be entitled to a payment of €30. You will need to contact us by using the methods listed above to make a request and claim a charter payment.

Please see our 'Irish Water Customer Charter' www.water.ie/about/our-customer-commitment/ for more information. The €30 will be issued to you by cheque and we will issue this to you within 30 working days. If we fail to issue payment to you within 30 working days, you will be entitled to an additional payment of €15. You will need to

contact us by using the methods listed above to make a request and claim this additional payment.

Irish Text Relay Service (ITRS):

1800 378 378

What is ITRS?

ITRS translates text into voice and voice into text to facilitate deaf and hard of hearing people in making and receiving calls in Ireland. Calls are relayed through ITRS agents who perform this translation.

How do I use ITRS?

Do I need to register for the ITRS App?

There is no registration required, just download the app or go to **www.itrs.ie** for further information. The app will require you to register the phone number you will be using to make or receive calls. Just follow the instructions in app or click on the “How Do I Use ITRS” tab on this site.

Register your number

To use the ITRS app you must first register the phone number you will be using to make and receive calls on the app.

- Step 1: In the ITRS app, go to “Menu” then “Registration”. Enter your phone number and then press “Register”. You will then be asked to make an activation call.
- Step 2: Leave the app and make the activation call from the mobile or landline number you are registering. You will only have 60 seconds to make this call.
- Step 3: Open the ITRS app again to receive confirmation your number has been registered successfully.
- Step 4: To end simply hang up the registration call and close the ITRS app.

We will also accept complaints from a recognised agency or third party who are confirmed as acting on your behalf.

Stage 1: Irish Water Initial Complaints Process

Lodging your complaint

When lodging a complaint with us, please provide the following information:

- Your name;
- Property address;
- Telephone number;
- Details of the incident or issue, including:
 - dates (where appropriate);
 - reference or account numbers;
 - any information or documentation you believe would assist us to understand and investigate your complaint further;
 - what you would like Irish Water to do to make things right.

Please note that the above information must be provided to Irish Water for your issue to be considered as a complaint, otherwise your issue will be lodged as a query and timeframes in this Code will not apply.

How we will respond to your complaint

We aim to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, we, or our service providers, will contact you within five working days with a resolution or an outline plan of the steps we need to take to achieve a satisfactory resolution to your complaint, under normal conditions.

We will document all complaints. We will always record your phone number, contact details and a summary of your complaint. Our Customer Service Advisor will give you a reference number as a future point of contact.

If a site visit is required, it will be arranged within a reasonable timeframe.

If your complaint is still open after five days, we will contact you with an update on or before the 10th working day from when you registered your complaint with us.

We will issue a final decision to your complaint within two months from when you registered your complaint. We will provide reasons for our decision and will inform you that your complaint is closed. In order to achieve this, we may need you to engage with us during the investigation, e.g. we might require access to your premises).

Stage 2: Irish Water Escalation Complaints Process

If you would like further investigation

In the event that you are not happy with our response to a complaint or the way it was handled, you may request the decision to be escalated to the Irish Water Customer Services Manager and reviewed. In order to do this, your request to escalate this complaint must be put in writing to Irish Water by contacting:

Post: **Customer Service Manager**
Irish Water
PO Box 860
South City Delivery Office
Cork City

Email: customerservice@water.ie

The decision will be reviewed, and a response provided within 10 working days, unless a site visit/operational works is required. If a site visit/operational works is required, we will agree a timeframe for response with you.

Following this review, we will issue a response to your complaint in writing, telling you we have closed your complaint and will refer you to the 'Code of Practice on Complaints Handling'.

We will also give you details for the CRU Customer Care Team for an independent review.

Escalation to the CRU on completion of Stages 1 and 2 of Irish Water's Complaints Process

Commission for Regulation of Utilities

If you feel your complaint has not been dealt with to your satisfaction, you can escalate your complaint to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU).

They can assist you once you have provided Irish Water the opportunity to resolve the matter in line with our complaint handling procedures.

To avail of the CRU's dispute resolution service, you must be a registered customer of Irish Water when the issue to which the complaint relates occurred, have communicated your complaint in writing to Irish Water and you must have completed our complaints process [both initial (stage 1) and escalation (stage 2) stages].

You can contact the Commission for Regulation of Utilities at:

**Customer Care Team
The Commission for Regulation of Utilities
Grain House
The Exchange
Belgard Square North
Dublin 24,
D24PXW0**

Telephone: **1800 404 404**

Fax: **(01) 4000 850**

Email: customercare@cru.ie

Web: www.cru.ie/home/customer-care/water/

Where the CRU is investigating a case of non-compliance with a Code of Practice, Irish Water will refrain from taking follow up action in relation to any monies that are the subject of a dispute. No follow up action will take place prior to the CRU issuing a decision on a breach or non-compliance with a Code of Practice.

When the CRU makes a final decision regarding a complaint, Irish Water is required to respond within three weeks or by a date specified by the CRU in its decision (if longer than three weeks), confirming that the CRU's final decision has been implemented.

If your unresolved complaint is about water quality or pollution incidents, you should contact the Environmental Protection Agency at:

Environmental Protection Agency
PO Box 3000
Johnstown Castle Estate
Wexford
Y35 W821

Telephone: **(053) 916 0600**

Web: info@epa.ie

We value feedback from our customers and are keen to hear suggestions about how we can improve our service.

We regularly carry out surveys to measure customer satisfaction, so you may receive a phone call or questionnaire after we have dealt with your complaint.

Protecting customers' legal rights

Our complaints procedure is a facility provided to and for customers and in no way prejudices a customer's legal rights.

Data protection

As part of a customer's interaction with Irish Water, a customer may provide personal data to Irish Water. All personal data will be treated in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) and the Data Protection Act 2018. In order to provide services to our customers, Irish Water engages service providers to help us deliver our services. Accordingly, personal data may be passed to our service providers or collected by service providers on Irish Water's behalf but only insofar as is necessary to provide water services to the customer.

For further information about how Irish Water processes personal data, data protection rights or to raise a query, please see our Privacy Notice at <http://www.water.ie/privacy-notice/>

Visiting your home

Our staff and service providers are trained to always identify who they are and who they are representing. They will always show you their identity card. You can contact us on **1800 278 278** to confirm the identity of our staff member or service provider.

Below is a series of sensible steps you should follow when dealing with people calling to your home:

- Always look through a window or door viewer before opening the door;
- Only open your door after connecting a door chain lock or placing your foot behind the door;
- Switch on outside lights when it is dark;
- Request and examine identity cards;
- Always think 'safety' – do not leave strangers alone on your doorstep while you go into another room. Always close the door if you need to do this. Do not leave strangers alone in your home;

- Take precautions – if you are unsure or suspicious, please refuse access and contact us on **1800 278 278** to confirm the identity of our staff member or service provider.