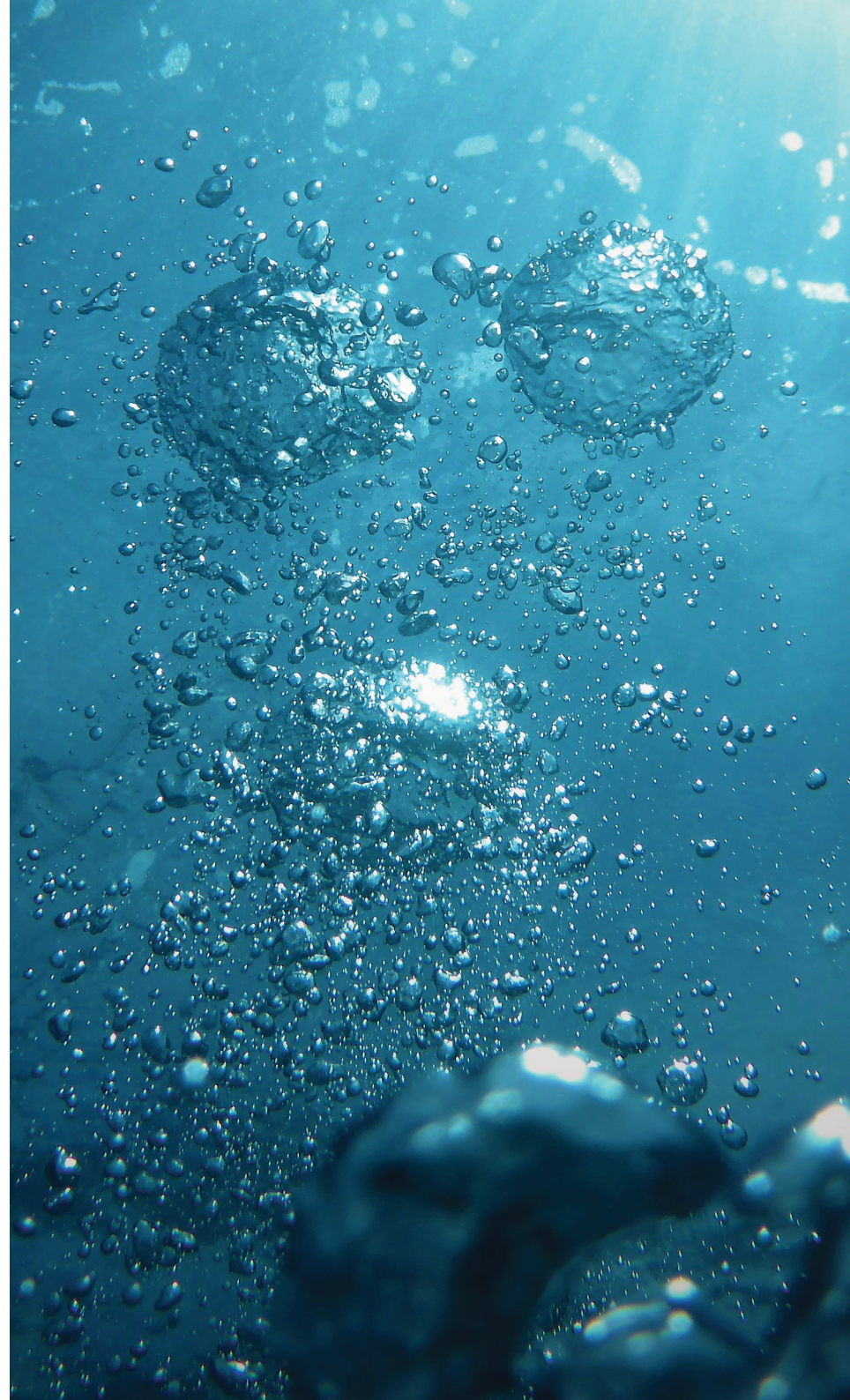




# Water charges factsheet

**[cec.uk.com](http://cec.uk.com) | 01737 556631**

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## **| Unlocking value in the water market**

The water market for business consumers in England was deregulated in April 2017 (2008 in Scotland), granting businesses the freedom to choose suppliers and negotiate contracts for water supply. With around 40 retailers and 25 wholesalers in the UK water market, businesses have ample choices.

While the water market is smaller than electricity and gas, evaluating alternatives through informed decision-making could result in significant savings and tailored services compared to businesses' current suppliers.

## **| Importance of water management**

Surprisingly, London is drier than Istanbul on most days. Each person in the UK uses around 143 litres of water daily and there's less available water per person than in many European countries. Therefore, implementing policies to reduce water and energy consumption is essential.

Monitoring water usage, identifying leaks, and incorporating water-saving practices contribute not only to cost savings but also align with a net-zero strategy.

Globally, industrial water consumption, particularly in agriculture and industry, places a strain on water supplies. The World Bank predicts a 40% increase in water demand by 2030, emphasising the need for responsible water management.

## | Billing structure

Business water users are billed in two main ways: metered and non-metered.

Metered users pay a standing charge based on the size of their water supply and a volume charge for the water they use. Non-metered users, on the other hand, are charged based on factors like business type, staff numbers, or the rateable value of their premises.

Regardless of the billing method, the total charge on your water supply invoice can be broken down into four parts.

There are options to review and potentially reduce costs in all four areas based on your specific circumstances.

① **Water supply:** the cost of providing water to your premises

② **Wastewater:** The cost of removing used water

③ **Surface area drainage:** the cost of removing rainwater from your premises

④ **Highway drainage:** Your contribution to maintaining drains around your property

## | Water metering

Businesses can opt to have AMRs (Automatic Meter Readers) fitted to provide visibility of hourly water consumption across their property portfolio. Doing this means that excess consumption can be quickly identified, and this can help spot leaks or highlight water wastage. As part of our consultation process when reviewing water costs with clients, we frequently recommend installation of AMR. The benefit soon becomes clear, and the clients invariably pay for themselves very quickly via consumption savings.

## | Our client portal

Where businesses opt to have AMR installed on water supplies, our client portal, CECIL, allows clients have to a full overview of their water energy usage data, including contracts, billing and reporting. CECIL shows how much is being spent, billing issues, and a support and meter data centre, saving the client money and making their business more efficient.

## | Securing £180,000 water charges refunds

We find that water is often the forgotten utility, but it can be a significant expenditure in certain sectors, in particular hospitality and manufacturing.

## | Recovering £180,000 of water overpayments

One of our clients is an international organisation that operates several private member clubs and restaurants worldwide. Whilst we manage energy procurement for this client, they also asked us to review historical charges for the UK operations, starting with water.

We went through all their invoices and identified an array of anomalies in the way that charges were being billed. We then worked with their suppliers to get these corrected.

## | Savings and benefits

This work resulted in **refunds to our client in excess of £180,000.**

We went back over several years of invoices to identify these errors. The single largest billing error was for £91,000 and that related to just one site.

The client was delighted, and we are now in the process of moving their portfolio for water into a group contract, which will save them further money. This will also provide them with significant non-tangible benefits, including reduced administration, a single monthly bill and one payment based on actual charges for all sites.



**Need help or an opinion about  
water charges for your business?**

Contact us at **hello@cec.uk.com**

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