

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs***Water Metering
Help for People Receiving Benefits or Tax Credits***

Many households benefit from having a water meter. But some households with meters suffer hardship because they need to use large amounts of water for essential purposes. Assistance is now available to households who fall into this group and some may be eligible to receive help with their bill. This document will explain how the system works and what the new provisions are. The document will also help you to decide if your household may be eligible for assistance with metered water bills.

What help is on offer?

If your household is eligible, then you will be able to opt to pay a fixed charge - the average household bill of your water company. This means you will know how much your bill will be, taking away the uncertainty of having a meter. Your water company will be able to tell you if your current bill is higher than this average.

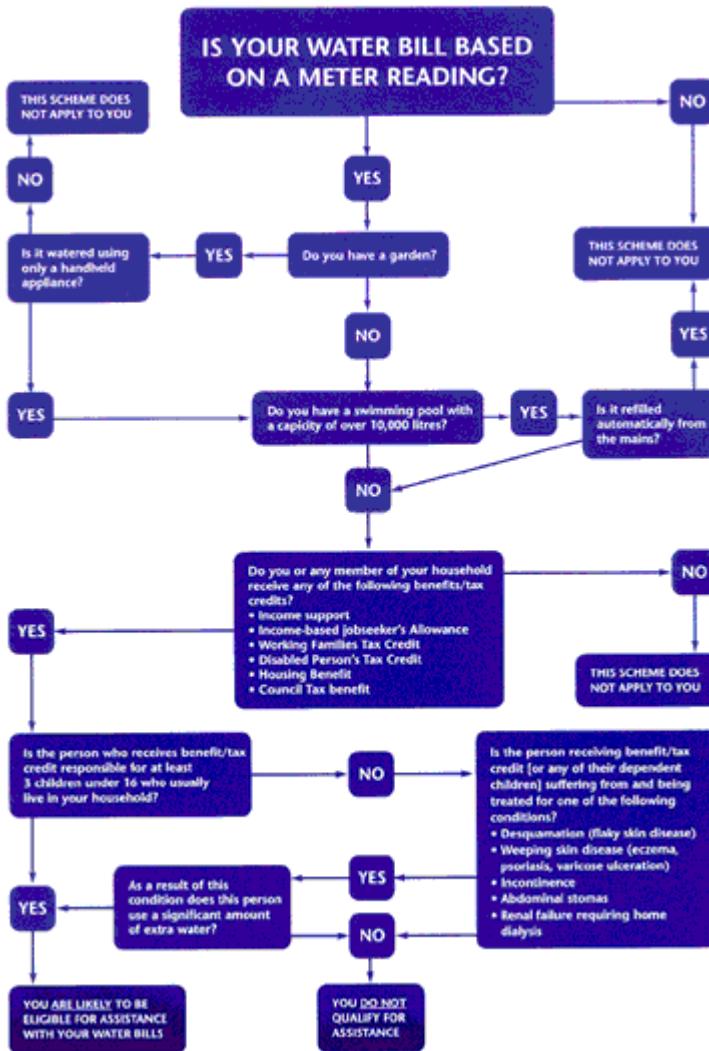
This may benefit you if you are part of a low income household that needs to use a lot of water (either because you have a large family or because you or your child have a specified medical condition) as you will not have to worry about running up large water bills.

Will I be eligible?**You may be eligible if:**

- You receive certain benefits or tax credits
and either:
- You are responsible for three or more children under 16
or
- You or your child have a specified medical condition which causes significant extra water use.

The flow chart (below) should help you assess whether you are likely to qualify.

Am I eligible for assistance with my metered water bill?



What should I do next?

Working through the flow chart should help you decide whether your household is eligible for help. If you think it is, the person who pays your water bill should contact the water company on their customer services line (the number should be on your water bill), and ask them to send you an application form.

When you get the application form you should complete it as fully as possible. You will need to enclose proof of your eligibility.

How do I prove that I am eligible?

You will usually need to enclose a photocopy of your most recent award notice - not older than a year in the case of benefits and not older than six months for tax credits.

Applicants with three or more children under 16

If you are claiming because you are responsible for three or more

children under 16, you will usually need to enclose the latest child benefit award notice.

Applicants with specified medical conditions

If you are claiming because you or your child have one of the specified medical conditions (as listed on the flow chart) you will need to provide some information about the condition, its treatment, and its impact on household water use. For example, you might enclose a photocopy of your or your child's prescription, prescription renewal form, or hospital appointment card.

The Completed Application Form

When you have completed the application form, and enclosed everything that is needed, you should send it to your water company. They will then write back to you with a decision. If you qualify, your next water bill will be based on the average household bill of your water company.

How long does assistance last?

You will need to re-apply each year to confirm that you are still eligible. Your water company will send you a reminder.

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