# Important Information / FAQs

## Can they shut off my water?

No. Legally, water companies are not allowed to cut off most domestic households if they don't pay their bills. They may take other action against you, as explained below.

## What do I do if my supplier or a debt collector contacts me for payment during the complaints process?

While a complaint is in dispute, no debt collection should happen.

Respond to any outstanding payment requests from your supplier with "my complaint is still in dispute".

If you are contacted by a debt collector, they might flood you with letters, calls, texts, and email – they are trying to intimidate you into giving up. Don't be intimidated! Call them back straight away, as delaying can mean that the flood gets worse. Clearly and politely state the following:

- They shouldn't have this case, it has been incorrectly handed over to them.
- You are disputing the accuracy of your bill and the complaint is currently under investigation by your supplier / CCW / DRWI / OFWAT.
- While the complaint remains unresolved you do not expect to be contacted by a debt collection agency.
- They should refer the case back to the water company.
- If they refuse, state categorically that this guidance is laid down by OFWAT and CCW clearly state that the debt collection agency must refer the case back to the water company.

## Can I do this if I'm a tenant?

If you are a tenant please be aware that in some circumstances the owner of the property can be responsible for the bill jointly with the occupier and the company might try to recover the money from the owner. You should check with them first.

## What action is the water company legally entitled to take?

According to the Citizens Advice Bureau, your water company may:

- Telephone you to ask for payment.

- Send reminder notices. Final notice gives you seven days to pay (if you have more than one unpaid water bill, you should get separate reminder notices for each bill).
- Pass your debt to a debt recovery agent.
- As a last resort, the company could take you through a Civil Courts claim, e.g. Small Claims Court or County Court to get a country court judgement (CCJ) to recover the money you owe. You have the right to defend their claim against you, and you may choose to engage in the legal proceedings, through mediation and to court, or stop your boycott and start paying at any time during this process.
- Send a notice of enforcement from a firm of bailiffs telling you they have the necessary authority. If they come, they could take goods to sell to pay the money you owe. This is if you continue to withhold AND ignore the legal processes, and once a CCJ has been acquired.

## Will it harm my credit score?

Your credit score can be adversely affected as a result of non-payment of your water bills. The credit score system is not transparent and we cannot say for certain that companies do not have automatic systems linked to non-payment. This may vary between water companies, and even between customers.

You will though be part of a community of active boycotters learning and supporting each other.

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