

Step 2. Tell Them Why You Won't Pay

Our three-step complaints process can guide you through a lower-risk process and gives all boycotters a collective basis to resist further consequences and push for more action to clean up our water!

i) File a formal complaint to your water company

Make a formal complaint in writing to your water company, stating that you have stopped paying the sewerage charges on your bill because you dispute it's accuracy. You can do this by email, by online form, or by post (which slows things down nicely as they will need to reply by post too).

[Find out who your supplier is.](#)

[Find out how much pollution your supplier has caused.](#)

Use our 'Making a Complaint to your Supplier' [template letter](#) to prepare your complaint.

Supplier contacts:

[Anglian Water](#)

[Dwr Cymru](#)

[Hafren Dyfrdwy](#)

[Northumbrian Water.](#)

[Severn Trent](#)

[South West Water.](#) (no online form - email them at customercontact@southwestwater.co.uk)

[Southern Water](#) (no online form - use the webchat ("Chat to us") or write)

[Thames Water](#) (no online form - email them at customer.feedback@thameswater.co.uk)

[United Utilities](#) (select "Other enquiry")

[Wessex Water](#) (select "Water supply or sewerage" > "Something else")

[Yorkshire Water](#) (no online form - call them or write to them)

You may want to ask them to put your account on hold while you are disputing the accuracy of your bill, and they are dealing with your complaint.

After making the complaint, keep in touch with your supplier. Your supplier should reply to you within 10 working days ([otherwise you are eligible for £20 compensation](#)). Contact them periodically to make sure they still have your case defined as a dispute (not a general enquiry) and your complaint and dispute is still active. You may want to continue engaging by post if you started that way.

You are likely to receive a response from your supplier rejecting your complaint or dispute. Ask them to review their decision. That gives them another 10 days to resolve your complaint.

Meanwhile, you should prepare to escalate your complaint...

ii) Escalate your complaint

First, inform your supplier you are taking your complaint to the Consumer Council for Water (CCW)

If your supplier says that your complaint has been resolved, ask them to confirm that it has passed “stage 2” of the complaints process. Ask them for the basis of their decision if they say your complaint has been resolved. If it has, inform your supplier you are taking your complaint to the Consumer Council for Water (CCW). Use our ['Informing your supplier you are escalating to CCW' template](#). Insist they put a hold on the account while the complaint is being discussed with CCW.

Second, complain to the Consumer Council of Water (CCW)

Fill out the [CCW online complaints form](#), using ['Making a complaint to CCW' template](#) for the “how can we help?” box. If you are not satisfied with the response from the CCW, you can take it to the next stage.

Third, apply for adjudication through the [Dispute Resolution for the Water Industry \(DRWI\)](#)

This is a relatively new service especially for CCW water industry disputes. On this page, you can find customer guidance and the online application form.

Fourth, if you are not satisfied with the CCW or DRWI outcome you can complain to OFWAT

Fill out the [OFWAT online form](#), using ['Making a complaint to OFWAT' template](#) to prepare your complaint.

Their online form will tell you that they do not deal with customer billing matters. They will try to push you back to CCW. Complain to OFWAT using the form anyway – the more people that contact OFWAT, the more they will understand our disgust.

iii) Celebrate and start again!

If you reach the end of the complaints process and your only option is to pay the outstanding balance – or if you feel the need to stop your boycott at any point – it is easy to pay the balance and you can start all over again!

For as long as we are doing it together we are making a big impact!

Campaigners and boycotters have massively shifted the conversation and steered political conversation over the last few years. We need to keep the pressure up.

You can also choose to continue non-payment. At this point, you may receive letters from debt collectors or be threatened with legal action e.g. a request for a County Court Judgement or a hearing through the Small Claims Court. Your protest is legitimate.

It is worth noting that mediation is now mandatory for all civil court claims. This is slowing down the legal process and enabling longer boycotts. The mediation session is a good opportunity to reiterate your points to your water company (through the mediator), and to agree a reasonable re-payment schedule if you have decided to stop withholding payment.
