



# Service for All

Your guide to our draft  
Vulnerability Strategy

Affinity Water

# In this document

- 3** We are Affinity Water
- 4** What is the vulnerability strategy?
- 5** Priority Services Register
- 7** What will happen once you have registered?
- 8** What to expect during a loss of supply?
- 9** Our commitment to you
- 10** Get help with paying your bill
- 11** How can you contact us?



If you would like this document in a different format such as:

- Large Print
- Braille
- Audio CD

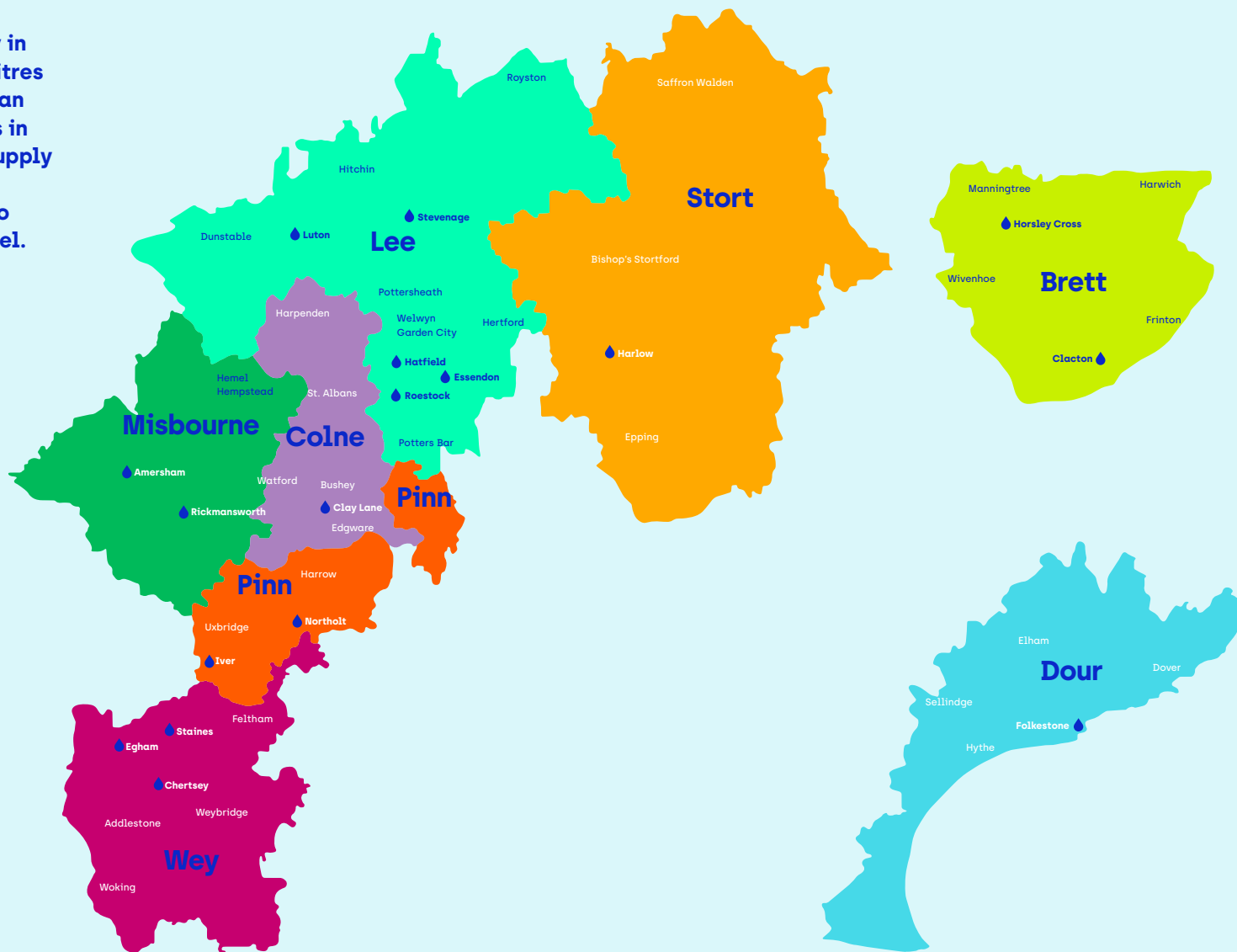
Please visit us at

 [affinitywater.co.uk/  
priority-services](https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/priority-services)

to use additional accessibility features  
or call  **0345 357 2406**.

# We are Affinity Water

We're the largest water-only supply company in the UK. We provide, on average, 950 million litres of water each day to a population of more than 3.83 million people across three supply areas in the southeast of England. We subdivide our supply area into eight different communities – each named after a local river – which allows us to tailor our service to customers at a local level.



# What is the vulnerability strategy?



We are proud to present our vulnerability strategy which sets out our plans for developing the support we currently provide and our ambitions for how we will meet the challenges and expectations of our customers by being innovative, efficient, and developing partnerships for our customers and communities.



## The full draft vulnerability strategy contains information on the following:

- Infographic - Our plan for 2025 – 2030
- Meet our Customers and Stakeholders
- Our research and engagement with customers and stakeholders
- The support we currently provide.
- Themes for our headline commitments and ambitions
- Our promises to you
- Our ambitions and timescales
- Metrics for how we intend to test that our vulnerability strategy is delivering for our customers.
- Case studies that demonstrate our work
- Our submission to our regulator [Ofwat] on our plans
- You can find our 'Draft Vulnerability Strategy – Service for All' at [affinitywater.co.uk/useful-links](https://affinitywater.co.uk/useful-links) If you would like a printed copy, please contact us on 0345 357 2406.

# Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is free to join and helps us identify customers who may need extra help with communication, access, physical or mental health needs.



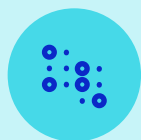
Are dependent on water for a medical condition



Have a chronic illness or short term medical condition



Are disabled



Have special communication needs



Are blind or partially sighted



Are deaf or hard of hearing



Have children under 5



Are over 60 years old



Require assistance for another reason, even if temporarily

 Of course, everyone has different needs so feel free to contact us to discuss your requirements.

## Signing up to our Priority Services Register

You can sign up online via 'Myaccount', through the post using an application form or directly with us over the phone.

We may also take direct registrations from third parties, such as relatives, carers, or charities, on your behalf if it's in your interest to do so.

We may also receive registrations and updates from other organisations such as wastewater companies, energy distribution network operators and energy suppliers.

### To apply for Priority Services Register you can:



Visit our website  
<https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/priority-services>



Telephone us on **0345 357 2406** and we can take your registration over the phone or arrange to send a form to you.

When applying for priority services as an Affinity Water customer, you'll be asked to select the service or need that applies to you so that we can provide you with the support you need.

We can also take registrations from third parties, such as relatives, carers, charities, or other utilities on your behalf if it's in your interest to do so.

Here is an indication of the extra help you can expect from us which may vary depending on the reason you have requested to be added to the Priority Services.

If you need more time to get to the door when we visit let us know and we will knock and wait.

Send text message service for unplanned supply interruptions so that you have accurate information about the incident and can plan accordingly.

For planned interruptions we will provide you with prior notice.

Our colleagues will carry identification that shows their name, photograph, logo, and telephone number to contact to verify their identity.

Deliver bottled water during a prolonged supply interruption and for those customers medically dependent on water you will be treated as priority during an event.

For customers medically dependent on water we will call you to understand the personal impact and support needed during an event and check in with you after the event.

We can speak with your nominated contact on your behalf including notifying them of a supply interruption that is affecting you.

We can send copies of bills to your nominated contacts.

Signpost to any alternative tariffs or additional services that may be suitable.

Offer a range of communication channels so you can communicate with us in a way that suits you.

We will provide bills in a format of your choice including braille, large print, audio CD and alternative coloured paper.

We will provide emergency notices such as boil notices in either braille, large print and for water quality incidents we will contact by telephone.

We will communicate with you in a clear, simple tone avoiding jargon and with clear guidance on any actions needed.

We provide an interpreter service if you wish to contact us by phone. Just request this service when you contact us.

You can communicate with us in British Sign Language

We provide a translation tool on our website in over 200 languages called Recite Me.

Offer a password service of your choice which we will use when we visit you to help protect against bogus callers.

Treat any disclosures of mental health problems in an appropriate non-judgmental manner.

Customer facing staff will have received 'Dementia Friends' training.

# What will happen once you have registered?

Once you have signed up to the Priority Services register, we will send you a welcome letter or email.

We will provide information on how you can let us know about changes to your situation or if you wish to be removed from the Priority Services Register.

If we receive a registration on your behalf, we'll write to you to confirm you've been added. If you wish, you can ask to be removed, and we'll review your request to make sure it's in your best interests.

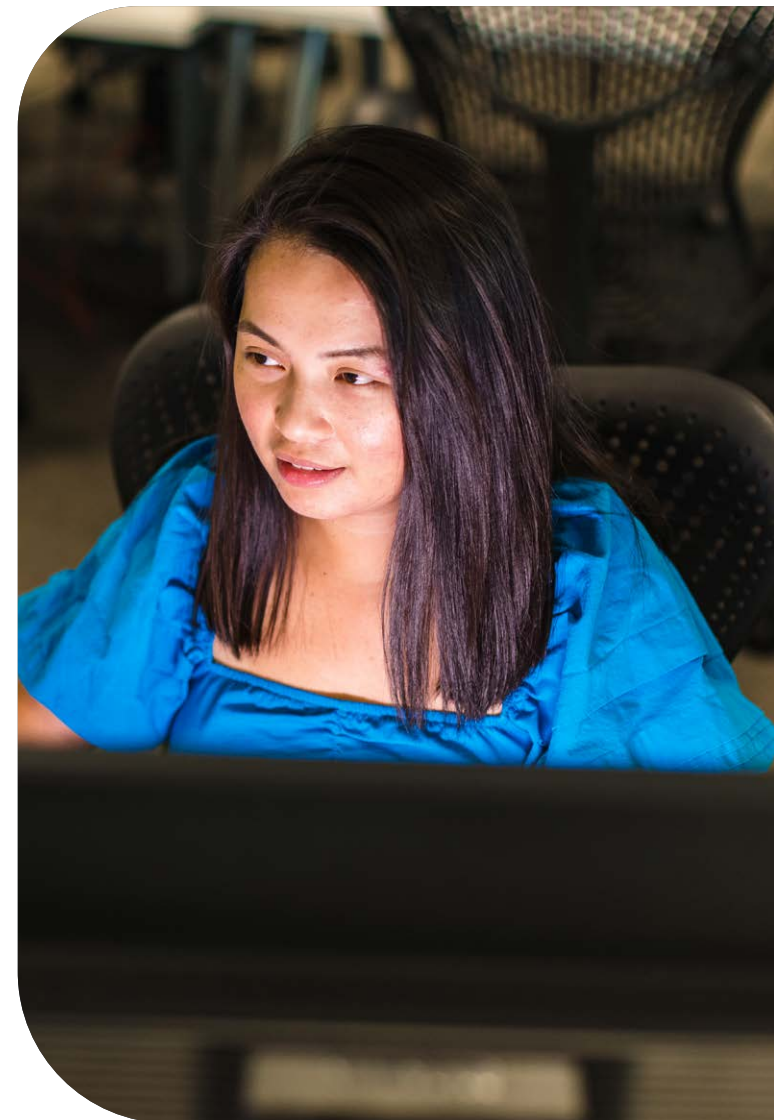
If we haven't heard from you within 2 years or received an update via one of our data share partners, we will check in with you to make sure the details we have on file for you are still accurate. We will send an email and/or text message and on occasions may write to you. If you receive an email or text message asking you to update your records, please do respond so that we can make sure we can support you in the right way.

When your record is updated, we will also contact you to let you know.

If you'd like to update or remove your details yourself, you can call us or visit our website at any time. You can also make alterations yourself via MyAccount. If you'd like to remove your details from the Priority Services Register, we may check whether you have any other support in place, and we'll ask you to confirm you no longer wish to benefit from our priority services.

If you are dependent on water for your condition or use a dialysis machine, feeding pump or automated medication, we may advise you to update your details and stay on the register so we can support you in water supply related emergencies. However, you can ask to be removed, and we'll review your request to make sure it's in your best interests.

**For further details about your right to access or change the personal data we hold about you, please view our main Customer Privacy Notice at [www.affinitywater.co.uk/privacy](https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/privacy)**



# What to expect during a loss of supply?

When an unexpected, prolonged incident is declared, our operational teams will mobilise to manage the incident. This will include how customers known to us on our Priority Services Register will be supported.



Definition of a prolonged incident is a loss of supply for over 6 hours.



## Tier 1 customers

These are customers who need extra help and are most at risk from a supply interruption for example those who are water dependent or have a chronic serious illness. Customers in this category can expect one or more of the following:

- Telephone contact to understand the personal impact of the incident and what support is needed.
- We can notify your nominated contact that a supply interruption is affecting you.
- Regular text message service so that you have accurate information about the incident and can plan accordingly.
- We will provide you with bottled water during emergencies – expected to be within 6 hours.
- Telephone contact post incident to check you are happy with the quality of the water, obtain feedback and if any other support is needed.

If a major incident happens overnight, we will send a SMS message to our Tier 1 customers.

## Tier 2 customers

These are customers who need extra help if the incident continues for 12 hours or more. This includes reasons such as pensionable age, physical impairment, mobility restrictions, blind or partially sighted. Customers in this category can expect one of more of the following:

- Regular text message service so that you have accurate information about the incident and can plan accordingly.
- We can notify your nominated contact that a supply interruption is affecting you.
- We will aim to provide you with bottled water.





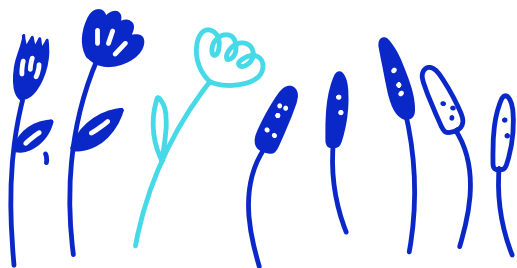
# Our commitment to you

We'll always try and provide you with the best possible service. If we fall short of the standards, we set ourselves, we'll make sure we put it right.

This is what you can expect if you are impacted by an interruption to your water supply.

If we're **planning to turn off your water supply** to carry out works on our network, we'll give you as much notice as possible, advising you when we expect to turn your water off and back on again.

- If we plan to turn off your water, we'll give you at least 48 hours' notice. If we fail to notify you of a planned interruption lasting more than four hours, we'll pay you £20. This does not apply to unplanned/emergency interruptions (see below).
- If we fail to turn your water back on by the time specified in our notice, we'll pay you £30 and a further £30 for each subsequent 12-hour period you have no water.



For **unplanned** interruptions, for example when your supply is cut off due to a burst water main, we'll notify you as soon as practicable when we expect to restore the supply and any information you may need about alternative supplies.

If we fail to restore your supply within 12 hours, we'll pay you £30 and a further £30 for each subsequent 12-hour period you have no water.

This is what you can expect when we agree an **appointment** with you:

- When an appointment is made, we must offer you a morning or afternoon appointment. We must also inform you of the times we consider to be morning or afternoon. If requested, we'll offer a specified two-hour time slot. If we fail to do this, you are entitled to £20.
- We must visit in the morning or afternoon as notified, or within the requested two-hour time slot. Where we have to cancel an appointment, we'll provide 24 hours' notice. If we fail to do this, we'll pay you £20



# Get help with paying your bill

We are committed to providing targeted support for those who are struggling to pay their water bills. We have a large number of schemes and projects, and work with trusted partners, to enable us to offer a wide range of support, whether on a temporary or longer-term basis. If you're having trouble paying, we're here to help.



## Apply for a reduced bill

We're able to support eligible customers with a reduced clean water bill. Our low-income fixed tariff (LIFT) is available to customers whose household income is less than £18725 a year, or who are currently claiming certain benefits; such as Universal Credit, Pension Credit or Job Seeker's Allowance.



## Apply for a bill cap scheme

A bill cap for our high water consumption metered customers. The Watersure scheme works by capping your charges, so additional water usage is not chargeable.



## Debt Support Schemes

If you're finding it difficult to pay your water bill due to financial hardship or a recent change in financial circumstances, we may be able to provide help or clear your debt through our debt support schemes.



## Get help with wastewater charges

We collect charges for some customers on behalf of their wastewater provider. They have separate schemes available to help customers struggling with their bills.



To find out more about any of these schemes please visit

📧 <https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/billing/struggling-to-pay> or contact us on 0345 357 2401 and we will help guide you to the most appropriate solution for your circumstances.

# How can you contact us?

The easiest and quickest way to manage your account is online where you can register or log into My Account. You can get instant statements, manage your payments, update your details, tell us if you're moving home and more!

It also helps if we need to contact you by email or text message with important updates, such as information about incidents that might affect your water supply.

## Billing and account enquiries (including Moving Home)

☎ Call **0345 357 2401**

Our phone lines can sometimes be busy, it's quick and easy to manage your account online at My Account. Open: Monday to Friday 8am - 8pm and Saturday 8am - 2pm.

## Emergencies 24-hour line

☎ Call **0345 357 2407** If you have no water or have seen a burst water main. Open: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Automated payment 24-hour line

☎ Call **0345 357 2400**

Pay your bill using a credit or debit card.

Open: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Get help with paying your bill

☎ Call **0800 697 982**

If you're having trouble paying, we're here to help.

View our handy guide for ways we can provide help and support tailored to you. Or you can complete our [contact us form](#) and our team will get back to you.

Open: Monday to Friday 8am - 8pm and Saturday 8am - 2pm.

## Water Quality

📧 [affinitywater.co.uk/contact-us-quality](https://affinitywater.co.uk/contact-us-quality)

If you'd like to contact us about your drinking water quality, please use our online form. Our team will respond during working hours (Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm).

For any emergencies, please check our latest incidents or call us on ☎ **0345 357 2407**.



### British Sign Language

[affinitywater.co.uk/bsl](https://affinitywater.co.uk/bsl)

Contact us using a British Sign Language video interpreter via the InterpretersLive! Service. You can find out more and connect on your phone or computer on our dedicated website page.

Open: Monday to Sunday 8am - midnight.

### Apply for a water meter

[affinitywater.co.uk/apply](https://affinitywater.co.uk/apply)

If you don't already have one, you can apply for a water meter online at any time. Almost 70% of our customers save money when on a water meter.

### Large print, braille or audio

Call 0345 357 2406

If you need anything in an alternative format such as large print, braille or audio.

You can also apply online in your My Account or complete [our form](#) and send back to us.

Open: Monday to Friday 8am - 8pm and Saturday 8am - 2pm.

### Live Chat

Live chat is available at [affinitywater.co.uk](https://affinitywater.co.uk)

Open: Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm whenever the web chat box appears on our website.

### Chat to us on WhatsApp

Add our number [07745 659300](https://www.whatsapp.com/business/profile/07745659300) to your phone and send us a message on WhatsApp. Open: Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm.

### Send us a message on Social Media

Send a direct message to us on Facebook or X (formally Twitter).

Open: Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm.

### Email

If you have a question or enquiry, please complete our online form [here](#).

### Write to us

Affinity Water, Tamblin Way, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 9EZ.

### Report a wastewater problem

We only supply you with clean water, and your wastewater is processed by one of the companies below, depending on where you live. We include some customers' wastewater charges on our bill to keep things simple for you. If you have any queries about your wastewater charges, please contact us directly.

To find out who your wastewater provider is or to report a wastewater problem, please view our wastewater area map or use our postcode checker to search our supply area.

**Anglian Water**

0345 791 9155



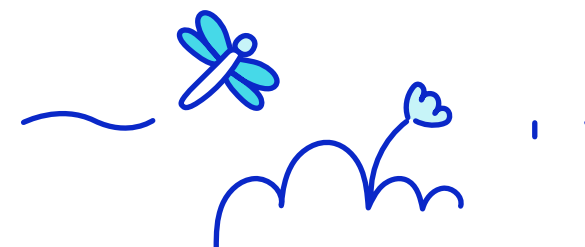
**Southern Water**

0330 303 0368



**Thames Water**

0800 316 9800



# Affinity Water

