



Updated WATRS case process from 1 September 2020

A new version of the WATRS Scheme Rules will come into force on 1 September 2020, introducing some improvements to the journey taken by a dispute referred to WATRS.

The new process for WATRS cases will be:

1. The customer must first raise their complaint with their water company directly.
2. Customers of water and/or water and sewerage companies can apply to WATRS if they meet all of the following requirements:
 - They have reached the end of the company's complaints procedure
 - They have referred their unresolved dispute to CCW
 - CCW has written to the customer saying that they can apply to WATRS
3. Non-household retail customers can apply to WATRS if they meet at least **one** of the following four categories:
 - They have reached the end of the company's complaints procedure or the company has issued a final position letter to the customer; or
 - The dispute remains unresolved 8 weeks after the customer first complained to the company; or
 - The dispute has been referred to CCW but is unresolved after their mediation; or
 - The dispute has been referred to CCW but remains unresolved 4 weeks later.
4. When WATRS receives an application, we will decide if we are able to consider it. Not all disputes can be considered by WATRS. See the WATRS Scheme Rules for full details (at www.watrs.org)
5. If we think we can consider the dispute, we will send the customer's application and supporting evidence to the company. The company will have 10 working days to either:
 - Settle the dispute by giving the customer everything they've asked for or by reaching an alternative agreement with the customer (if this happens, the case is closed); or
 - Send a written response to the claim, along with supporting evidence.

The company will also have a limited opportunity to say that WATRS is not able to consider the dispute. If this happens, WATRS will decide if it can deal with the dispute.

6. Where the company sends a written response to the claim, it will be shared with the customer, who will have 5 working days to comment on it. The customer cannot introduce any new matters or new evidence at this stage.
7. A WATRS adjudicator will then weigh up all of the information and evidence in the case, as well as the relevant law, and will prepare a written decision containing full reasons.

8. The adjudicator's decision will be sent to the parties as a preliminary decision. Both the customer and the company will have 5 working days to comment on the preliminary decision.
 - The customer's comments may only:
 - highlight factual inaccuracies;
 - highlight errors in law; or
 - submit additional evidence relating to points already raised in the case
 - The company's comments may only:
 - highlight factual inaccuracies;
 - highlight errors in law; or
 - highlight instances where the adjudicator has acted outside of the powers granted under the Scheme Rules
9. The comments on the preliminary decision will be sent to the adjudicator, who will have 3 working days to make any changes. The adjudicator will then produce the Final Decision.
10. If the customer accepts the Final Decision within 20 working days, it will be binding on the company. If the customer rejects the Final Decision, or does not accept it within 20 working days, the company will not have to do what the adjudicator has said.