Dear Customer

**Wholesale Charge Deferral Scheme - financial support for businesses impacted by Covid 19**

**Why are we writing to you?**

We believe that your business may be impacted by Covid-19 and therefore you are eligible to receive additional financial support under the Scottish water industry’s Wholesale Charge Deferral Scheme.

In normal circumstances we would have contacted you directly to make you aware of the potential benefits of such a Scheme, however that has not been possible due to the current Covid-19 restrictions.

Because we believe that your business would be eligible for the Scheme and that you may find it to be of benefit during the current circumstances, we have made an application to Scottish Water on your behalf, to include your premises in the Scheme.

Please contact us if, after reading this letter, you decide that you do not want to be part of the Scheme and we will arrange to end your participation in the Scheme.

If you are happy to be included in the Scheme you do not need to take any action at this time.

**What is the scheme?**

The Scheme has been developed to provide financial support to businesses that are impacted by Covid19. We have summarised how the Scheme would operate below. You can find further details of the Scheme and how you could benefit on our website here.

If you are accepted into the Scheme, Scottish Water will defer (delay) the invoicing of a proportion of the wholesale charges that we pay them for your water and sewerage services, which we will then pass on to you. As a result, the bills we send to you will show the amount of charges that you will need to continue to pay in line with your current payment terms, as well as the value of the charges that have been deferred, which you will need to pay at a later date.

As explained on our website the amount of wholesale charges that will be deferred depends on: the services at your premises, whether the water supply has a water meter and, if so, on the size of the water meter.

The Scheme will initially run for 6 months from 24 March 2020, but may be extended to the end of December 2020 depending on how long Covid-19 restrictions apply to businesses.

When the Scheme ends you will need to start paying the charges that have been deferred in addition to the charges for the services that you are using at the time. Scottish Water will set the timetable for the payment of deferred charges. Our current expectation is that all fixed water charges, fixed sewage charges and drainage charges that have been deferred will need to be paid over 12 months. For metered customers, the payment of deferred volumetric water and volumetric sewage charges will depend on when your water meter is read. We will advise you when you need to pay any deferred charges.

**What happens next?**

Unless you tell us that you do not want to be part of the Scheme, we will write to you when Scottish Water lets us know if our application has been successful.

If you are accepted into the scheme and have already paid charges that are covered by the Scheme we will either make a repayment to you or credit that amount against your future bills.

**Our Undertaking to you**

The document attached to this letter is our formal Undertaking to you regarding your participation in the Wholesale Charges Deferral Scheme. While the Undertaking is written in more formal language the key features are:

* We will refund to you or provide credits for any sums that are deferred under the Scheme that we have already collected from you,
* You will not be charged for taking part in (or leaving) the Scheme and you will not be charged interest on any deferred payments,
* The value of your charges that we defer will match the value of our wholesale charges that are deferred by Scottish Water,
* When the deferral scheme comes to an end, the timetable for paying deferred sums will be consistent with the timetable that Scottish Water will expect licensed providers to pay the deferred wholesale charges to them,
* We will write to you again when the deferral scheme comes to an end or there are any changes to the scheme.

**Providing financial security to Scottish Water**

Our involvement in the Scheme requires us to provide Scottish Water with financial security for the value of the deferred charges. We have opted for an ‘Assignation’ which gives Scottish Water the rights to collect the deferred charges directly from our customers at the end of the Scheme.

Every time we send you a bill during the period of the Scheme we will include a notice reminding you that the rights to collect the deferred charges have been assigned to Scottish Water. You will not need to take any action with regard to the deferred charges until the end of the Scheme.

At the end of the Scheme, we will write to you to confirm the payment arrangements for the charges that have been deferred.

**In closing**

As we have explained above, believing that you are eligible for and would benefit from the Scottish water industry’s Wholesale Charges Deferral Scheme, we have applied to Scottish Water to include your premises in the Scheme.

Please contact us if you decide that you do not want to be part of the Scheme.

If you are happy to be included in the Scheme you do not need to take any action at this time.

A copy of this letter will be provided to Scottish Water for their records to demonstrate that we have written to you informing you:

* Of our undertaking to you, and
* That the rights to collect the deferred charges have been assigned to Scottish Water.

**Undertaking**

1. (a) Pursuant to the Water Services (Wholesale Charges Relief Schemes) Directions 2020, we have applied to Scottish Water for their agreement that our obligations to pay amounts of wholesale charges to Scottish Water under our wholesale services agreement with them (in so far as relating to you) will be temporarily deferred in accordance with those directions;

(b) amounts of charges which you are obliged to pay under your agreement with us reflect the amounts of wholesale charges for which deferral has been sought;

(c) in this Undertaking,

(i) the amounts of wholesale charges which are agreed to be deferred as mentioned in (a) above are referred to as **Deferred Wholesale Charges**, and

(ii) the amounts of charges mentioned in (b) above which reflect the Deferred Wholesale Charges are referred to as **Relevant Charges**.

2. Your obligation to pay us the Relevant Charges shall be deferred for as long as our own obligations are deferred as mentioned above (i.e. those charges shall continue to fall due by you to us when we invoice you but the requirement to pay is deferred).

3. Where the circumstances require in order to extend to you the full benefit of the Scheme, we will provide refunds or credits for Relevant Charges that have already been collected.

4. When the deferral of our wholesale charges comes to an end, the Relevant Charges will be collected from you according to a timetable consistent with the collection of the Deferred Wholesale Charges by Scottish Water.

5. In consideration of Scottish Water agreeing to defer our obligations as mentioned at paragraph 1 above, we have assigned to Scottish Water our rights to collect the Relevant Charges from you under your agreement with us [(although our current expectation is that Scottish Water will return these rights to us in time for us to resume collecting them from you)].

6. We confirm that we will not render or apply any fee, charge or levy (including any requirement to pay interest) to or on you in relation to the implementation and/or operation and/or winding down of, and/or withdrawal from, the Scheme.

7. We will write to you again when the deferral of the Relevant Charges comes to an end or there is any other change in the deferral arrangements affecting you.