



## **INFORMATION NOTE: Water and Sewerage Charges**

### **Charges for Vacant Non-household Properties**

#### **Introduction**

Water, sewerage and drainage charges are payable by occupiers of non-household properties (also known as non-domestic premises) which are connected whether directly or indirectly to public networks. To date, vacant non-household properties have been exempt from these charges.

#### **What is Changing?**

The current exemption for vacant non-household properties is to be removed. These properties will become liable for charges in the same way as those that are occupied.

#### **When will Owners of Vacant Properties be Charged?**

Owners of vacant properties will become liable for water, sewerage and drainage charges from 1 April 2017.

#### **Why are Owners of Vacant Properties to be Charged?**

Whilst vacant properties may not be in active use to produce goods and to deliver services, owners of these properties still benefit by being able to rely on the continued availability of services provided by Scottish Water. There is a reliance, in particular, on drainage services to ensure that rainwater from roofs and car parks continues to be drained so that properties are not flooded. Subsequent occupation of these premises is also dependent on the premises being fully serviced - that is - with access to services such as water and sewerage.

The costs associated with maintaining services to these properties currently falls to other non-household customers.

#### **Will condemned or listed buildings continue to be exempt?**

No. All properties connected to public water mains/sewers will be required to pay charges regardless of the condition or listing.

#### **What will the Charges be?**

The charges will be calculated on the same basis as for occupied properties. Charges include: water, wastewater, roads drainage and surface drainage.

Where a meter is fitted, water and wastewater charges will include standing charges plus a volumetric charge calculated by reference to readings taken from that meter. Drainage charges are by reference to the Rateable Value of the property.



Where a meter has not been fitted, then you will be required to pay the standing charges only. Drainage charges will be by reference to the Rateable Value of the property. Once the property is reoccupied, water and sewerage charges will be calculated by reference to the Rateable Value of the property. It will be the duty of the landlord to ensure that Licensed Providers are notified of the change of occupancy.

### **Can Vacant Properties be disconnected?**

Yes. Properties can be disconnected from water and wastewater services. Advice on the costs and processes for disconnection should be sought from Licensed Providers.

All disconnections are permanent and are, in general, only suitable for properties which are expected to be demolished. If a water supply and/or a sewerage connection is required at some date in the future, the property owner will need to meet the costs of connecting to Scottish Water's water mains and sewers.

### **I am an Owner of a Vacant non-household Property – what should I do now?**

You should check that you have a Licensed Provider. If you do not know/do not have a Licensed Provider, you should register with one. Details of Licensed Providers can be found at Scotland on Tap: <http://www.scotlandontap.gov.uk/>.

### **What happens if I don't pay?**

If your property is connected to public water mains and/or sewerage, you are required to pay for services whether or not you use water or flush water down the drains. Licensed Providers are required to pursue this debt.

### **Are there any other Changes that are Relevant?**

It will become mandatory, from the 1 January 2017 for owners/landlords to notify any change of occupancy to their Licensed Provider. If they do not, they will become jointly and severally liable for any relevant water and sewerage charges with the occupier.

Owners may contact their Licensed Providers directly or use the Landlord Portal <https://slp.cmascotland.co.uk/> to report changes of occupancy. The Landlord Portal enables owners to track the changes easily for all of the properties that they own.

### **More information**

More information can be found on the Scottish Government's website: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/waterindustryscot/SWI-1/charges>. If you have questions about your bill or your meter, please contact your Licensed Provider.