

A dynamic splash of water with numerous bubbles and droplets, set against a light blue background. The water is captured in mid-air, creating a sense of movement and freshness.

Who's who in the Scottish water industry

A number of organisations play a part in ensuring that the Scottish water industry meets its obligations to customers and to the environment. We work closely with these organisations. This information note provides an outline of the roles and responsibilities of each organisation and of customers themselves.



1. Customers

There are more than 130,000 business customers and 2.2 million household customers in Scotland. The Scottish people play an important role in the water industry as consumers and, through Ministers and the Scottish Parliament, as owners of Scottish Water.

2. Water and wastewater service providers

Scottish Water

Scottish Water is a publicly-owned business, answerable to the Scottish Parliament and the people of Scotland. It was formed in April 2002 following the merger of the three former water authorities. Scottish Water provides water and wastewater services to households across Scotland and runs Scotland's network of pipes, water sources and treatment works. Scottish Water also acts as the wholesaler of water and wastewater services in the competitive market for business customers and public bodies in Scotland.

For more information see www.scottishwater.co.uk

Licensed providers

Since 1 April 2008, all business customers and public bodies in Scotland have been able to choose their water and wastewater service supplier. New suppliers in the competitive market buy services from Scottish Water at wholesale and compete for the custom of business customers. New suppliers in the Scottish water industry must be licensed by us.

We keep a register of all licensed providers on our website (www.watercommission.co.uk).

3. Ministers and the Scottish Parliament

Scottish Water is accountable to Scottish Ministers and, through Ministers, the Scottish Parliament. Ministers work on behalf of Parliament and the people of Scotland by setting objectives that Scottish Water must achieve and defining the principles that underpin its charges. Scottish Ministers also established the statutory framework that is used to regulate the Scottish water industry.



4. Regulators and customer representatives

The Water Industry Commission for Scotland (WICS)

As the economic regulator, our role is to ensure that the Scottish water industry provides a high-quality service and value for money to customers. We have a statutory duty to promote the interests of customers. The main way we do this is by setting prices for water and sewerage services that deliver Ministers' quality, environmental and customer service objectives for the water industry at the lowest reasonable overall cost. We also facilitate competition in the Scottish water industry.

For more information see www.watercommission.co.uk

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

SEPA's aim is 'to provide an efficient and integrated environmental protection system for Scotland which will both improve the environment and contribute to the Scottish Ministers' goal of sustainable development'. SEPA monitors Scottish Water's discharges to ensure they meet environmental standards. SEPA also advises Ministers on the need for future investment in the industry. For more information about SEPA see www.sepa.org.uk

The Drinking Water Quality Regulator (DWQR)

The DWQR provides an independent check that Scottish Water is complying with the legal standards, set out in regulations, for drinking water in Scotland. The regulator has extensive powers to acquire information, conduct investigations and take enforcement action should this prove necessary. The DWQR also advises Ministers on the need for future investment in the industry. For more information about the DWQR see www.dwqr.org.uk

Waterwatch Scotland

Waterwatch Scotland is the national complaints handling authority for all customers of Scottish Water and consumer representative body for the water industry in Scotland. Its role is to investigate complaints against Scottish Water and licensed suppliers, represent customers' views and interests, influence policy and inform and advise.

For more information about Waterwatch Scotland see www.waterwatchscotland.org



5. Cross-regulatory groups

The Output Monitoring Group

Scottish Water's performance in delivering outputs is monitored jointly by the Output Monitoring Group, which comprises representatives from the DWQR, SEPA, Waterwatch, Scottish Water, and WICS. The group is chaired by the Scottish Government. The group increases transparency for customers and stakeholders and ensures that Scottish Water is accountable for delivering the required outputs. The group meets every three months to review progress against ministerial objectives and interim milestones for output delivery. It also oversees the process by which changes are made to the programme as a result of better information or revised priorities.

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