



New connections to the water and wastewater networks in Scotland

This information note explains who is responsible for upgrading and extending the water and wastewater networks in Scotland and for meeting the costs of new connections



Introduction

New homes, businesses and shops place additional demands on the network of pipes, treatment plants, reservoirs and other facilities that provide our clean water and dispose of sewage and other waste. These additional demands can sometimes be accommodated by the existing infrastructure. However, where existing capacity is limited, upgrades and extensions to the network may be required.

The Scottish Government issued Regulations in 2015¹ that clarify how the costs of the different elements of a new connection are shared between developers and existing customers.

Responsibility for the costs of new connections

The component parts of a new connection can be split into four distinct elements:

- Part 1: the connection from individual premises to a water main or sewer;
- Part 2: the water mains and sewers that connect developments (for example, a street of houses) to trunk mains and trunk sewers and some sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS);
- Part 3: the local bulk infrastructure, such as trunk mains and trunk sewers, water service reservoirs, wastewater pumping systems and some SUDS;
- Part 4: the strategic assets such as raw water intakes, water impounding reservoirs, water pumping stations and aqueducts, and water and wastewater treatment works.

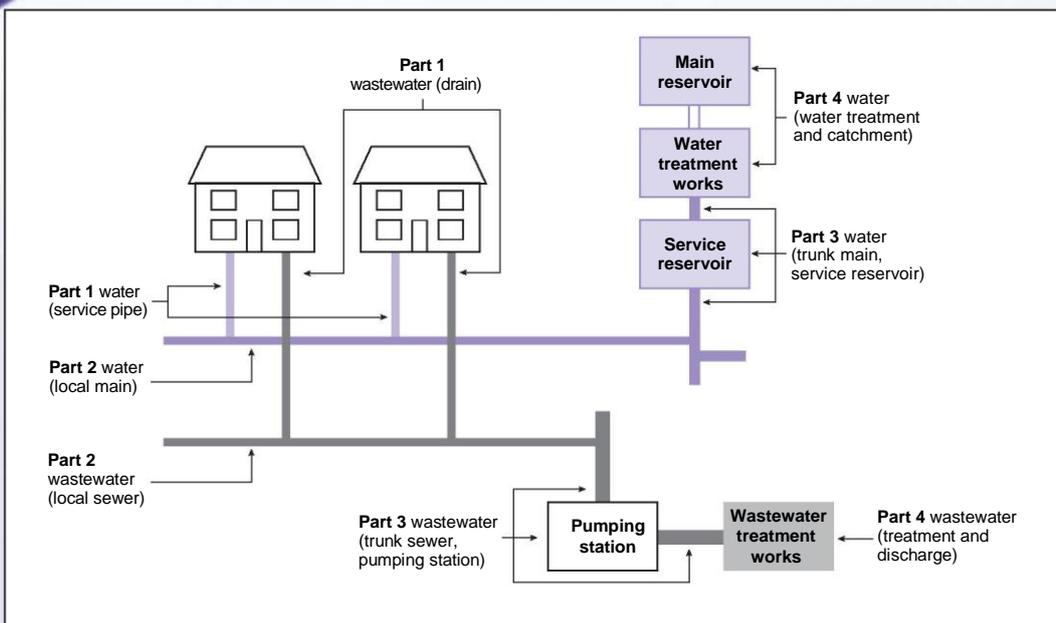
The four components are illustrated on the following page.

All new connections to the water and wastewater networks will require service pipes and drains (Part 1). The costs of this work are the sole responsibility of the developer. Scottish Water provides detailed information for developers on the arrangements for installing service pipes and drains².

New development may also require extensions or upgrades to the Part 2 and Part 3 elements of the water and wastewater networks. This element of the connection work is funded by developers, subject to a contribution towards the cost of the works from Scottish Water to take account of the future income that will be received from the new connection. The contribution is only paid when the connection is complete.

¹ 'The Provision of Water and Sewerage Services (Reasonable Cost) (Scotland) Regulations 2015'.

² For detailed technical information on construction standards for new connections see Water Research Council (WRC) policy documents 'Water for Scotland' and 'Sewers for Scotland'.



The level of this 'reasonable cost' contribution is determined by the Regulations and depends on the number and type of properties being connected and the charges in place at the time of connection. For domestic properties, the maximum contribution in 2015-16 is around £1,555 for water connections and £1,805 for wastewater connections. Scottish Water is required to contribute the cost of any Part 2 and Part 3 work needed to accommodate the connection, or the maximum contribution, whichever is lower.

Strategic network capacity

The cost and programming of any work associated with upgrading the Part 4 elements of the network are the responsibility of Scottish Water. As part of the Quality and Standards process, Scottish Ministers direct Scottish Water to meet the Part 4 strategic capacity requirements of all new housing developments and the domestic requirements of commercial and industrial customers.



When we set price limits in a Strategic Review of Charges, we ensure that Scottish Water is funded both to provide the ministerial requirements for new strategic capacity and to develop their processes to improve their planning in this area. Details of the funding provided to Scottish Water for network growth are set out in our 'Final Determination'.³

The infrastructure charge

New connections are also subject to an 'infrastructure charge'. This charge takes account of the cost to Scottish Water of carrying out reinforcements to its network that cannot be attributed to particular developments, but instead are related to general background growth in demand. This charge was initially set in 2006 for both water and wastewater connections and has subsequently been increased in line with inflation. The infrastructure charge in 2014-15 was £333.90 for a water connection and £333.90 for a wastewater connection.

Disputes and complaints

Any concerns about the level of connection costs or the timing of a network upgrade for a particular development should, in the first instance, be raised with Scottish Water. Ultimately, an appeal can be made to us. We have the power to determine whether Scottish Water has properly applied the Regulations in arriving at its assessment of the connection costs.

Planning upgrades or extensions to the network

The normal local authority planning process identifies where development will occur. Once a development has obtained planning permission, and the developer has agreed to fund the relevant portion of any Part 2 and Part 3 costs, it is Scottish Water's responsibility to ensure that additional strategic network capacity is delivered in a timely way to meet the needs of the new development as they arise. It is, however, inevitable that the delivery of new treatment plants and other strategic assets may be subject to construction and planning delays. We therefore encourage developers to seek early dialogue with Scottish Water to discuss their development proposals.

³'The Strategic Review of Charges 2015-21: Final determination', Water Industry Commission for Scotland, November 2014



Scottish Water is a consultee in the planning process. However, we consider that there is no need for Scottish Water to object to any planning application. Scottish Water may still occasionally need to seek a time-limited delay if studies are required to determine investment needs. In most cases developers who have committed to providing the required upgrade to the local infrastructure should be connected with minimal delay.

Scottish Water publishes an annual Strategic Asset Capacity and Development Plan. This allows developers and local authorities to identify the extent of strategic network capacity that currently exists in a location, and therefore any areas where development can proceed without any delay. The plan also provides information on Scottish Water’s current investment proposals and their impact on strategic network capacity.

Summary of responsibilities

The table below shows who is responsible for each area of activity in upgrading and extending the water and wastewater networks.

Who is responsible for...	Organisation
... providing and paying for local capacity?	Developers
... providing and paying for strategic capacity?	Scottish Water
... making a reasonable cost contribution?	Scottish Water
... deciding how much strategic capacity should be provided?	Scottish Ministers
... providing incentives to ensure local development priorities ('social development') are met?	Central and local government (not Scottish Water)
... ensuring that Scottish Water has sufficient funding to provide strategic capacity?	The Water Industry Commission for Scotland
... producing an annual report outlining where there is strategic capacity?	Scottish Water



Find out more

The 'Connections' section of Scottish Water's website provides useful information for customers and developers. This includes a helpful overview, '**A guide for obtaining new water and wastewater services**'.

Revised April 2015

Water Industry Commission for Scotland

First Floor, Moray House, Forthside Way, Stirling FK8 1QZ

T 01786 430200

E enquiries@watercommission.co.uk

www.watercommission.co.uk

