

Metering and Billing Policy

1.0 Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy outlines the metering and billing approach for all heat networks operated by Stonewater Group and covers both district and communal heat networks across all tenures. Heat Networks are defined as any system which provides heat to more than one final home. Any further references to Stonewater imply the group.
- 1.2 As a not-for-profit organisation, Stonewater does not generate profit from service charges including the provision of energy to our homes. We recover the full costs incurred in the delivery and management of energy services to enable us to continue to deliver services to our customers.
- 1.3 This policy supports the delivery of metering and billing in an accurate and transparent way for customers, ensuring we are able to communicate effectively with customers and key stakeholders.
- 1.4 Stonewater intend to roll out metering on all communal heat networks where feasible and in compliance with this policy. Where it is unfeasible, customers will continue to be charged in line with the Service Charge Setting and Review Policy.
- 1.5 Where the information contained in the tenancy agreement, lease, covenant or deed of transfer is different from the information in this policy, the information contained in these documents will take precedence over this policy.

2.0 Policy scope and objectives

- 2.1 This policy ensures compliance with the Heat Network (Metering and Billing) Regulations 2014, as amended in 2015 and 2020. These regulations aim to enhance energy efficiency and transparency in billing for heating, cooling, and hot water supplied through heat networks across Stonewater stock.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all heat networks operated by Stonewater and covers both district and communal heat networks. This includes buildings managed or owned by Stonewater and rented, leasehold and shared ownership tenures.

3.0 Regulatory and legal considerations

- 3.1 Heat Network (Metering and Billing) Regulations 2014, as amended in 2015 and 2020.

4.0 Policy details

4.1 Metering

- 4.1.1 Before proceeding with the installation of individual meters, Stonewater will assess whether installing individual meters is cost-effective and feasible using the assessment method specified in the regulations.
- 4.1.2 Where technically feasible and cost-effective to Stonewater, Stonewater will work with customers to install individual meters for customers to measure their consumption of heating, cooling, or hot water.

- 4.1.3 A building-level meter will also be installed to measure the heat consumption of a single building on a district (multi-building) network. The building level meters will help Stonewater monitor network efficiency and identify the source of suspected inefficiencies, such as heat loss through pipework. They will not be used to measure customers' heat consumption, nor to bill customers based on consumption.
- 4.1.4 Customers will be offered an option between pay-as-you-go meters, which rely on top-ups or monthly payment options which require customers to pay for energy consumed in arrears and on a monthly basis. Where required, customers will be provided with advice and support on choosing the most appropriate payment method. The energy cost for either option will be the same.

4.2 Billing

- 4.2.1 Stonewater will issue statements, via a third-party metering and billing company at least annually, based on actual consumption data obtained from the installed meters.
- 4.2.2 Energy Bills will clearly detail the customer's energy usage, applicable rates, and any other charges, ensuring transparency and enabling customers to understand their energy costs. Customers will be provided with access to their consumption data free of charge.
- 4.2.3 Where a customer is vacating a home subject to pay as you go metering, this will be checked as part of their exit interview and any debts recovered as part of our Recharge Policy.
- 4.2.4 Charges will include:
- Non-fuel costs, including operational management costs and the cost of billing (i.e. the charge from metering and billing supplier for their work in managing the billing arrangements).
 - The cost of the customer's energy based on metered consumption
 - The cost of communal heat where applicable
 - Any standing charges, taxes, duties and regulation charges
 - Stonewater's service charge as outlined in our Service Charge Setting and Review Policy
- 4.2.5 Once customers have moved to metered billing, all service charges relating to individual energy consumption will be removed.

5.0 Customer Support and Access

- 5.1 Stonewater will offer, either directly or through a third-party, on-site and one-to-one support for customers when metering is rolled out for each scheme. Support will be tailored according to customer vulnerabilities.
- 5.2 All new customers will receive information around energy usage and efficiency, the benefits of different payment methods, metering and billing

practices – including customer rights to access consumption data and dispute resolution procedures.

- 5.3 All customers will have access to support to address enquiries or concerns regarding metering, billing, or energy consumption. On-going support will be tailored according to customer vulnerabilities and will be provided through the relevant housing support team. It will include the provision to be signposted to external support and advice – for example to cover energy management and energy grants.
- 5.4 Stonewater will allow pay-as-you-go meters to continue to operate without credit up to a maximum value of £25. This will provide customers with heat and hot water in times of need, whilst preventing the build-up of significant debt on the meter. This Emergency credit must be repaid by customers in full once they restart making top-ups. The impact and value of Emergency Credit will be reviewed annually.
- 5.5 Customers on credit billing may be switched to pay-as-you-go meters if they fail to make regular payments to cover their heating costs. Any debt will be collected through a proportion of future pre-payments.
- 5.6 Customers must allow Stonewater and their contractors access to their property to install and service the meters under the terms of their tenancy or lease agreements. Customers refusing to move over to individual meters may be subject to enforcement action in line with our Access Policy and charged for any costs of legal action.
- 5.7 Where customers refuse meter installation or to sign up to the metering scheme they will be charged an estimated bill based on the average cost of energy for each unit within the scheme, plus any costs as outlined in our Service Charge Policy.
- 5.8 All customer data will be managed in lined with our Data Protection Policy.

6.0 Service Standards

- 6.1 Stonewater will monitor customer feedback and any feedback from appointed providers to understand issues and address our future plans accordingly.

7.0 Equality, diversity and inclusion

- 7.1 The application of the policy and any associated procedures will be applied in a non-discriminatory and consistent way.
- 7.2 We undertake to treat all customers fairly to ensure that no discrimination takes place in line with our Equality and Diversity policy, ensuring that this is applied fairly and consistently.

Last issued: 16.9.2025

Next review date: 16.9.2028