

The United Reformed Church Northern Synod
Factsheet 4: Surface Water Drainage

This sheet explains a new system of charging by water companies, to be introduced from 1 April 2005.

The water industry regulator, Ofwat, has instructed water companies to standardise methods of charging for the processing of surface water drainage (ie rainwater). In the past, charging has tended to be calculated on the basis of rateable value, which has meant that churches, as charities, and therefore not rateable, did not pay anything towards this service. The new formula will be based on the surface area to be drained, on the assumption that the volume drained will be proportional to the area to be drained.

Water companies will be contacting some customers during the run up to the introduction of this new system to ask them to confirm the extent of their boundaries. Churches should be aware that any areas that are grassed or have their own soakaways, and therefore do not drain to the main sewer, should be excluded from the charge. Churches are advised to check this carefully.

Although there are rights of appeal or complaint against water company decisions, it will not be possible to argue against the system as a whole.

Further information can be obtained from your local water company, or visit www.nwl.co.uk, www.yorkshirewater.com, or www.unitedutilities.com.

a.a. 8.12.04