

Date Provided: 31 August 2017

## Water Charges

Ref: EFOI / 5575

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### Information Request

*Charges for water supply and sewerage services*

*It is the practice of water companies to charge for these services via local authority rents, under the Water Industry Act 1991. Please advise the arrangement in your area along with any arrangements to refund for overcharging caused by any scenario that may apply.*

*This may be with respect to Water Orders regarding re-selling or due to disparity between metered charges and those based on RV.*

I have reviewed your request and investigated whether there is any information which can be disclosed to you. Please find below the information the council holds, and which I am pleased to provide to you.

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### Response by Eastbourne Borough Council

Eastbourne Borough Council is only billed, and subsequently recharge to the residents, water and sewerage for properties that have a communal meter (in Eastbourne's case – the courts that offer Sheltered housing/ Retirement housing).

The bills come into Eastbourne Borough Council for the block as a whole and then the actual costs are apportioned by bedroom weighting and charged to customers rent accounts on a weekly basis.

As charges for these costs are charged in arrears after the bill has been paid, any refunds for overpayments are taken off the consolidated amount charged to the resident.

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## **Further Queries and Responses**

*As the 'middle man' between consumer and supplier, do you consider that you are re-selling the service to the tenants?*

No – we are not re-selling the service to tenants. EBC separate the water charges that have been billed in one invoice which has been received and paid by EBC and pass them onto each tenant according to how many bedrooms they have in their property.

*By 'bedroom weighting' do you refer to rateable value?*

Bedroom weighting does not refer to rateable value. It refers to a system of dividing a bill that has been received to ensure that 2 bedroom properties pay a larger proportion of the bill than 1 bedroom properties.

*How are 'overpayments' possible on a metered basis?*

When the meter cannot be read, for whatever reason, there may be an estimated reading proposed by the water company. Where this happens, there may be an over/ underpayment that occurs.

*Can you confirm that you have not been involved at any time in re-selling to non-sheltered tenants?*

In previous years, we would have passed on the water charges that EBC had been billed for to tenants of various general needs and temporary accommodation units as well as those in Sheltered Housing/ Retirement Housing, depending on whether they had a single meter for the building or individual meters per property.