

Sharing a water supply with your neighbours

Help and advice on how to get your own

The water that comes out of your tap arrives from two main sections of pipework after it leaves the water main. The first is the **communication pipe** which takes water from the main. It usually sits under the public highway and is owned, and looked after, by us. The next section is the **supply pipe**. This takes water from the **communication pipe** to one or more properties and is the property owner(s) responsibility to maintain.

Where the **communication pipe** and **supply pipe** meet there's usually a water meter (normally just inside or outside of the property boundary). The meter sits in a chamber called a **boundary box** along with a stop tap (to control the flow of water).

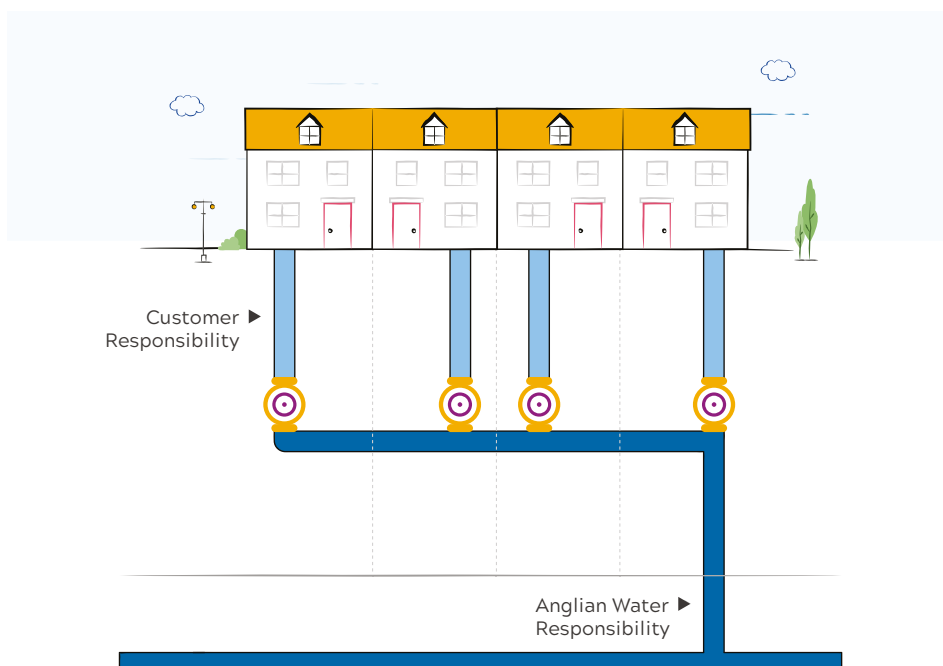
What is a shared water supply?

A shared water supply is when one of our **communication pipes** feeds into one **supply pipe**, feeding multiple properties. The **supply pipe** can have multiple branches, each leading to different properties. Many older properties, particularly terraced houses, are on a shared supply.

When you're on a shared supply, you're jointly responsible for the **supply pipe** – along with everyone else who has their water supplied by it. That applies even if part of the pipework doesn't sit within your land.

Where you can find your water meter can vary when you're on a shared supply. Here are some common scenarios where you might find a meter:

- Where the shared supply meets the **communication pipe** at the highway boundary. If that's the case, all of the properties' usage goes through this single meter. Even if there's not a meter, there'll usually be an external stop tap so that the water to all properties can be turned off in an emergency.
- Inside the property – usually under the kitchen sink.
- Sat just within your land just before the **supply pipe** comes into the property.
- There might not be a meter at all.

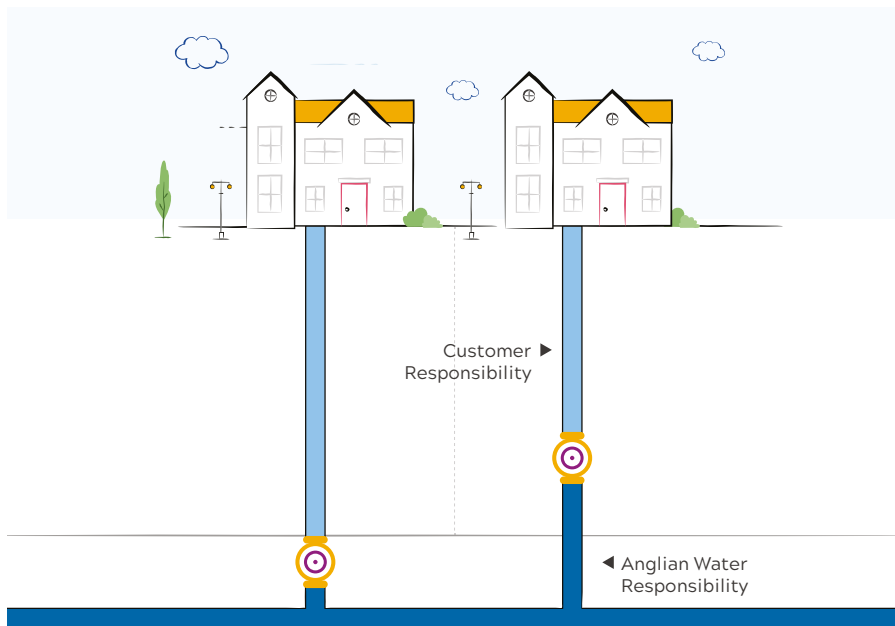


What is a single water supply?

A single supply is when one of our **communication pipes** feeds a **supply pipe** which serves only one property (as shown below).

In this case, it's solely the property owner's responsibility to look after and maintain the **supply pipe**. The pipe will normally sit within the land owned by the property. In some cases, it might run through neighbouring private land. Even when this is the case, the **supply pipe** is still the responsibility of the homeowner who is fed by the water pipe. Any details about rights of access may be included on the title deeds for the property.

Under Section 64 of the [Water Industry Act 1991](#) any new separately occupied properties must be supplied by their own **supply pipe**.



How do I know if I'm on a shared water supply?

It's worth knowing that as the **supply pipe** is always the responsibility of the homeowner, we're not able to come out to identify if you're on a shared supply until there's been some initial investigation.

If you're a homeowner, your property's title deeds might contain information about any shared pipework. If you're a tenant, you should speak to the homeowner.

To physically check signs of being on a shared supply, we'd recommend turning off your external stop tap. Before you do this it's a good idea to speak to your neighbours so they know there's a chance their water might go off briefly and they can confirm if it does or not. The external stop tap is typically found in the meter chamber at the boundary of where the property meets the highway.

After turning off your stop tap, head inside and turn on your kitchen tap. After a minute, the water should stop coming out. Then repeat the same test at one or more neighbours' homes. If only your water supply is affected, you're on a single supply. If you, and one or more of your neighbours are affected, you're on a shared supply.

If the test is inconclusive (or your meter's in the same place as scenario 2 or 3 on the image above) we'd recommend you get a plumber to take a look. Head to [watersafe.org.uk](https://www.watersafe.org.uk) to find a list of approved plumbers in your area.

What are the benefits of coming off a shared supply?

There are lots of great reasons to have your own independent water supply:

- You (or the property owner) will have full responsibility for the quality and maintenance of your water supply, and won't have to rely on anyone else to make any repairs.
- You'll have consistent water pressure because you'll no longer have any other properties making use of the water supply at the same time.

- If we use a meter to bill, you can be confident that your usage will be completely accurate, so you'll know you're only paying for the water you use.
- If you're the one paying the bill, you can apply for extra support if you, or your household has any vulnerability issues or problems paying your bill.
- If you need to upgrade your supply at any point, you won't need the consent of other properties.
- It could make your property a more attractive purchase if you ever sell it.
- If your property was built before 1980, some of your pipework may be made of lead. Lead poses a health risk especially to children under 10 or those who are pregnant. Find out more [here](#).

Who will do the work if I decide to make the change to my own supply?

We'll install the **communication pipe** from our water main up until the boundary of the property as it'll be our responsibility to maintain.

You're responsible for installing the **supply pipe** that connects our **communication pipe** to your property. If the pipework needs to go through any land that doesn't belong to you or the homeowner, you'll need to get permission, but if the pipe only needs to travel through your own land, you won't. If you're not laying the pipework yourself, you can employ an independent contractor to do it.

Once the **supply pipe** is in, we'll install a water meter where our **communication pipe** meets your **supply pipe**. If you're currently on an unmeasured tariff (where we don't use your meter to bill you) you're under no obligation to change to a measured tariff, but you can make the swap to see if you'd be better off and switchback if you find it's not for you anytime within the first two years of having a meter. Find out more [here](#).

I'd like to go ahead – what do I need to do next?

You need to speak to our Development Services team to apply for a **new water connection**. We'll always come back to you with the costs of the Anglian Water side of the work within 28 days of you submitting your application. There are two different options:

1 – If you already have an account with us for your water (or a retailer if you're a business customer):

You need to apply for a **replacement water connection**. If your property was built before 1980 there's a chance that your pipework and the Anglian Water side of the pipework may be made of [lead](#). If we find that the pipes we're responsible for are made of lead, we may replace it for free or at a reduced cost (you'll still be responsible for the cost of replacing your pipework). Before we agree to do our work for free (or at reduced cost), we'll need proof that the pipe is lead. To do that we'd recommend you either give us a call anytime on **03457 145 145** to arrange for a lead test or get a licensed plumber or contractor to take a look and provide us with evidence.

2– If you don't have an account with us for your water: You need to apply for a **new water connection**. With this type of connection, you'll always be charged for the cost of us replacing our pipework even it's made of lead. To apply, give our Development Services team us a call on **0345 606 6087** (and select option 1). Or head online to inflow.anglianwater.co.uk

What happens when you have your own supply?

Once our work is all done and you're connected via your own supply, it's then your responsibility to remove yourself from the existing shared supply. All you need to do is make sure you're disconnected as close as possible to the point where your pipework joins the shared supply. This makes sure that there's no impact to your neighbour's water quality because leaving an unused section of pipework full of water can lead to stagnant water in their supply. We recommend you use an [approved plumber](#) to complete your disconnection.

If you have any questions or need any help with submitting your application, please call us on **0345 606 6087** (selecting option 1).