

# A letter to our customers – from our CEO

Dear customers, I wanted to reassure you that during these unprecedented times we're doing all we can to maintain our essential services and support you during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As I'm sure you'll appreciate our staff and their families have been and will be affected too, but they remain resolutely committed to doing everything possible to keep water supplies flowing.

## Helping you

I know you'll be worried about the health and wellbeing of your loved ones and that some of your circumstances may have changed drastically and unexpectedly.

We're doing all we can to maintain our contact services for all of our customers, but please only get in touch if you need us urgently. This will help us to protect our services for our vulnerable customers and those who are most in need.

If you're struggling to pay your bill as a result of the impact we're here to help. To speak to someone you can call us on **0330 305 0277**.

We're also going to do everything we can to make sure our most vulnerable customers are reached and supported over the next couple of months. So if you have underlying health conditions, poor mobility or other health challenges please sign up for our priority services at [southernwater.co.uk/register-for-individual-needs](https://southernwater.co.uk/register-for-individual-needs).

## Supporting our communities

We're launching our community grants scheme to support our most needy charities. Information will be published on our website over the next couple of weeks.

We're working with Age UK and the Alzheimer's Society to use our volunteering capacity to make phone calls and reach out to those who are isolated or vulnerable. Sometimes just having a chat can make a big difference to someone's day. We're also reaching out to other partners to see what help we can offer to help our communities.

We're lucky that we operate across the beautiful South East with areas of outstanding natural beauty and over the coming months and weeks we'll be highlighting our local nature reserves, reservoirs and riverside walks that are free for everyone to enjoy and get a bit of fresh air while social distancing.

To help keep everyone safe during this unprecedented time, all our reservoir car parks are now closed. While walking routes are still available, we'd ask that you continue to follow government advice and practise social distancing.

## **Maintaining water quality**

I'd like to reassure you that you should use your water as normal.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate's statement, which can be read in full at [dwi.gov.uk](http://dwi.gov.uk), is as follows: "in the UK, drinking water supplies are routinely disinfected as part of the treatment process, and this process removes all harmful pathogens including viruses."

The coronavirus COVID-19 is thought to spread between people who are in close contact with one another, and all evidence from the spread of the virus shows that the drinking water supply is not a route for transmission of the virus. People should continue to use tap water as normal, including for drinking, hand washing, bathing, cooking, and cleaning teeth."

However, if you've been specifically advised by Southern Water to restrict your use of water for water quality or public health reasons e.g. a boil water notice or do not use notices, please continue to follow this guidance until advised by us to do so.

## **Emergency repairs**

As an essential public service, maintaining our services to customers is vital. In keeping with government advice on COVID-19 we're taking all necessary steps to protect our colleagues while keeping our services running.

Our teams will continue to operate sites, repair assets and continue with planned investments. Robust resilience plans are in place – our ways of working are changed but our mission remains the same.

## **How you can help us**

We're working hard to ensure we protect our essential services while also looking after the health of our colleagues and their families. You can help us by reporting any leaks at [southernwater.co.uk/help-advice/leaks/report-a-leak](http://southernwater.co.uk/help-advice/leaks/report-a-leak) and only flushing the three Ps (pee, poo and paper) down the loo to minimise blockages.

These are very testing times for all of us but by working together we can make sure we're looking after those who need us most and keeping our services running.

I wish you all the very best in what will be challenging months ahead.



**Ian McAulay**  
**Southern Water Chief Operating Officer**