



Surface Water Charges



A first of its kind service for UK businesses.



Portrait is the first company in the UK to offer a dedicated service helping businesses dispute their surface water charges. Many companies unknowingly overpay for surface water drainage based on outdated or miscalculated assessments by water providers. Our expert team leverages cutting-edge data analysis, mapping technology, and business rates expertise to secure fairer charges for businesses like yours.

Why Are You Paying for Surface Water Drainage?

A portion of your water bill includes charges for removing rainwater that falls on your premises, including:

- Building roof areas
- Car parks
- Hardstanding surfaces

Water suppliers use data from the valuation office, land registry, ordnance survey maps and drainage infrastructure records to determine the chargeable area. However, their calculations often fail to consider shared land parcels, communal drainage, and have an absence of understanding the specifics relating to your property.

How Long Does it Take?

Cases can be resolved in as little as **4 weeks**. With no upfront costs and all water company fees covered by Portrait, there's no risk to your business—only potential savings.

In-Depth Assessment at
No Cost to You.

Portrait conducts a free
review of your business
premises to determine
whether you're being
overcharged.

How We Challenge Overcharges

Fusion of Business Rates Expertise & Data - We leverage our extensive understanding of business rates assessments to cross-reference site valuations with chargeable surface water bands, identifying discrepancies in surface water charge banding.

Ordnance Survey Mapping & Environmental Analysis - By utilising high-precision geospatial data, we analyse topography, soil absorption, and runoff behaviours to determine if your property is being inaccurately assessed.

Water Infrastructure Asset Mapping - Our access to detailed drainage infrastructure records allows us to verify which areas drain directly into public sewers and which do not, highlighting areas where charges should be reduced or eliminated.

Comprehensive Land Use Review - We incorporate local environmental factors, such as permeable surfaces, natural drainage, and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), which may significantly impact how much surface water actually enters the sewer network.

Water Company Calculation Review - Cross-checking your banding against water provider methodologies ensures we can make a strong case for a charge reduction.

Challenges submitted within
2 working days.

Cases resolved in as little as
4 weeks.

Fast & Effective Dispute Resolution

If we identify grounds for a reduction, we act immediately. Our process ensures:

- Drainage & Water search conducted at no cost to you.
- Submission to your water supplier within 2 working days.
- Negotiation on your behalf to dispute excessive charges.
- Coordination of a water supplier survey to validate our findings (also covered by Portrait).

Guaranteed Savings & Rebates

If your dispute is successful, you will:

- Be moved to a lower charge band.
- Receive a backdated refund from your supplier for overpayments.
- Enjoy permanent cost savings on your water bills.

No upfront costs.

Water company fees covered
by Portrait
(even if the challenge is not
successful).

Why Instruct Portrait?

Challenging your water charges can be a time-consuming and complex process. Water drainage searches require specialist knowledge and can be expensive, but Portrait provides this service for free.

Additionally, many water providers charge businesses for reassessment surveys if the findings do not result in a change – Portrait covers this cost, even if your case is not successful.

With no financial risk and a strong success rate, instructing Portrait ensures your business is not overpaying for surface water drainage.

What Are The Costs?

Portrait provide a commission-based success fee structure to all businesses and only charges a commission based on successful savings being achieved.

30% of any reimbursed amounts paid back by your water supplier.

30% commission on the savings (difference) achieved in the reduction of your surface water charge.

In recognition of the importance of maintaining a positive cash flow for our clients, we structure commission fees in a way that ensures no financial impact.

Any initial refund from your water provider for historic overpayments are spread over a 24-month period. This ensures customers can benefit from the initial lump sum payment and realise savings beforehand.



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