

Brian Rous

I think it is appalling that some people find themselves in a situation where they cannot pay for their water supply and clearly steps should be taken to address this and support these customer

I am, however, concerned by schemes offered by water companies where additional charges are levied on customers to support discount schemes for those that cannot afford to pay bills. I think these schemes are inherently unfair.

[1] Support for customers who are struggling to pay their water bills should be provided through general taxation and the welfare system. CCW should be petitioning the government to ensure that bills can be paid from the Welfare system where required. By taking money from other customers to pay the bills of poorer customers, water companies are bypassing the general taxation system which means that the burden for supporting the poorer customers shifts to other households rather than large corporations.

[2] Typically these schemes operate on a threshold basis so that customers earning over a certain amount contribute to the system, but those earning less than the value can claim from the system. This is inherently unfair as customers earning just over the threshold (e.g. £16,381 per year) are required to support customers earning just under the threshold (e.g. £16,379). Especially as those earning £250k per year typically pay the same as those earning £16,381.

[3] It looks bad when water companies asking customers earning just over the threshold to pay to support customers, whilst shareholders are continuing to earn profits.