

The Water Market is Changing

Get ready for lower prices and better customer service

Everything you need to know about [business water deregulation](#) (and what it means for your business)

What's happening to business water supplies in England?

In April 2017, the water industry in England begins to deregulate and the barriers to competition start to come down.

If you are a business, charity or public sector organisation, it means you will be able to switch the retail part of your water services to your choice of service provider.

From 1 April, you will be a free agent – you will be able to switch your water supplier whenever you choose.

- Only 1 in 4 English businesses are informed about the upcoming water deregulation, and many don't understand the potential benefits of this change in the market.

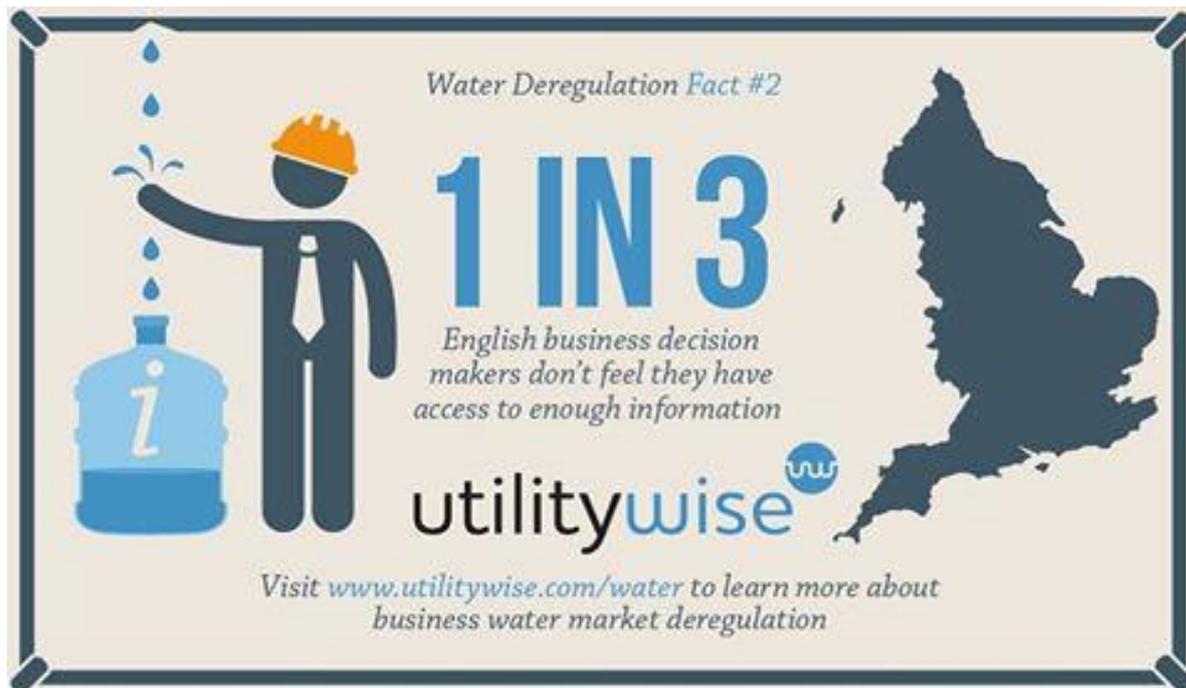
Why is it happening?

It's all about customer services and price. The water industry is worth £3 billion – and each water supplier has a monopoly on its geographical area.

After years of dealing with complaints about poor customer service and high prices, Ofwat asked the 14 regional water companies in England to split their businesses between wholesale (the infrastructure) and retail (customer service and billing).

With businesses free to switch water supplier whenever they want, customer service should improve ... and prices should drop.

- 3 in 5 English businesses think the choice of providers will be better
- 4 in 10 English businesses think customer service will be better
- Half of English businesses say value for money will be better



Which parts of the UK are affected?

England's business [water market is deregulating in April 2017](#). That's when you'll be able to switch business water supplier whenever you want.

Scotland deregulated its water industry in 2008. At the start, many customers in Scotland were critical of the service they were receiving from Scottish Water. The government decided to break its monopoly to force improvements.

Customers felt that any alternative was a bonus and were prepared to switch regardless of price. Many did just that ... and we think the same thing will happen in England, too.

Since the market deregulated in 2008, many Scottish businesses receive a better service and lower prices.

Will prices drop in England, too?

Yes ... but we don't yet know what prices will be in 2017. Initial savings will probably be small, with bigger savings to come in 2020.

Ofwat will make even bigger changes to the water market in 2020, which is why you should expect to see prices drop even further. Whatever happens with prices in 2017, you're almost certain to see a saving eventually.

You can choose whichever water supplier you want. Switching sends a strong message about quality customer service.

How many businesses will switch?

The short answer: we don't know yet. We do know that not enough businesses are aware that the water market will be deregulated from next year. Only 4 in 10 English businesses know that change is on the way, and only 1 in 4 feel informed about how deregulation will affect them.

The more you know about deregulation, the more likely you are to switch and save.

How will it affect my business?

You'll be able to switch and save when you want. That means you no longer have to tolerate poor customer service and high prices. The savings you make will allow you to invest more in your business, and perhaps even generate more revenue.

For businesses running across multiple locations, there's also a plus side when it comes to administration. Instead of dealing with five water suppliers in five different places, you can align your entire business operation under one supplier. That will save you time and allow you to focus on other things.

You could also benefit from lower CO2 emissions, water efficiencies, and better monitoring and understanding of how you use water ... allowing you to make even more savings.

Excited to switch? You should be

Water market deregulation is a major positive for businesses in England and Scotland. With savings and better customer service on the horizon, it's an exciting opportunity.

Prepare your business and get ready to switch in April 2017.

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