



# Million voices for public services - speaking up for water and environmental services

The services provided by UNISON members who work for water companies and the Environment Agency are as equally important to our well being as those provided by our colleagues in health, education and local government.

In the years ahead these services will face significant challenges. Some of these challenges are external, such as climate change, which will mean more varied and extreme patterns of rainfall and pressure on our flood defences. Others are internal, such as how employers recruit new workers to address an ageing workforce.

However, our services also face political and economic choices. What, for example, should be the role of the market and competition in delivering our water services, and how can investment in our water and environmental services be secured in tough economic times?

**UNISON's Million Voices charter for water and environmental services sets out the principles that we believe should underpin our responses to these challenges.**

1. No citizen of the UK should be cut off from water supply for any reason owing to the risks to personal and public health.
2. We should all pay for water and sewerage services in a way that recognises its status as a precious natural resource that needs to be conserved and used wisely.
3. Those who suffer from 'water poverty' need to be supported by access to social tariffs and, where appropriate, through the social benefits system.
4. Water companies need to be accountable to customers



and the services they provide must be efficient, reliable and affordable. Competition and fragmentation will risk destroying the links between customer and water service provider.

5. The environment must be protected and strictly regulated by the Environment Agencies covering the UK. The polluter pays principle must be adhered to.
6. The Environment Agencies must be fully funded to enable them to carry out their remit to fully protect the interests of people, flora and fauna.
7. The prospects of sewer flooding for domestic customers must be eliminated. Water companies must be obliged to invest enough to avoid this happening.
8. The costs of highways drainage should not be met by water charge payers. Instead the costs should be met by central and local government.
9. The capital costs of improving our water environment should, at least in part, be funded by the government on behalf of the whole country as most of this expenditure is required to comply with European legislation.
10. Ofwat should ensure that our water companies are regulated in a way that they are incentivised into ensuring that we have a well trained and valued workforce ready to meet the investment challenges ahead.

**All together we are a  
Million Voices for  
public services**

a million  
voices  
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services

add  
your  
voice

UNISON campaigning  
for a fairer society

[unison.org.uk/million](http://unison.org.uk/million)

UNISON speaks up for workers in water companies and the Environment Agency on all terms and conditions, occupational and professional issues.

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