

### Briefing note: Uptake of water metering by domestic properties / Actions to reduce domestic water use

July 2018

#### At a glance

- Very few domestic properties have a water meter installed
- Actions are being implemented to reduce demand and improve efficiency

#### Latest Figure

2016/17:  
Of a total 2,442,303 billed domestic properties, 447 were metered and 2,441,856 unmetered.

#### Trend

Decreasing

#### Briefing note background

Although Scotland currently has surplus water capacity, the situation varies regionally and some supply areas are in deficit (ASC, 2016a). Projections indicate increasing pressure on resources in future, with water availability reducing because of climate change, coupled with increasing demand due to population growth (ClimateXChange, 2016).

Scottish per capita consumption figures have remained fairly stable<sup>1</sup> over the last decade, and are still higher than other North-Western European countries; Belgium, Denmark, England, Germany and the Netherlands (ASC, 2016a).

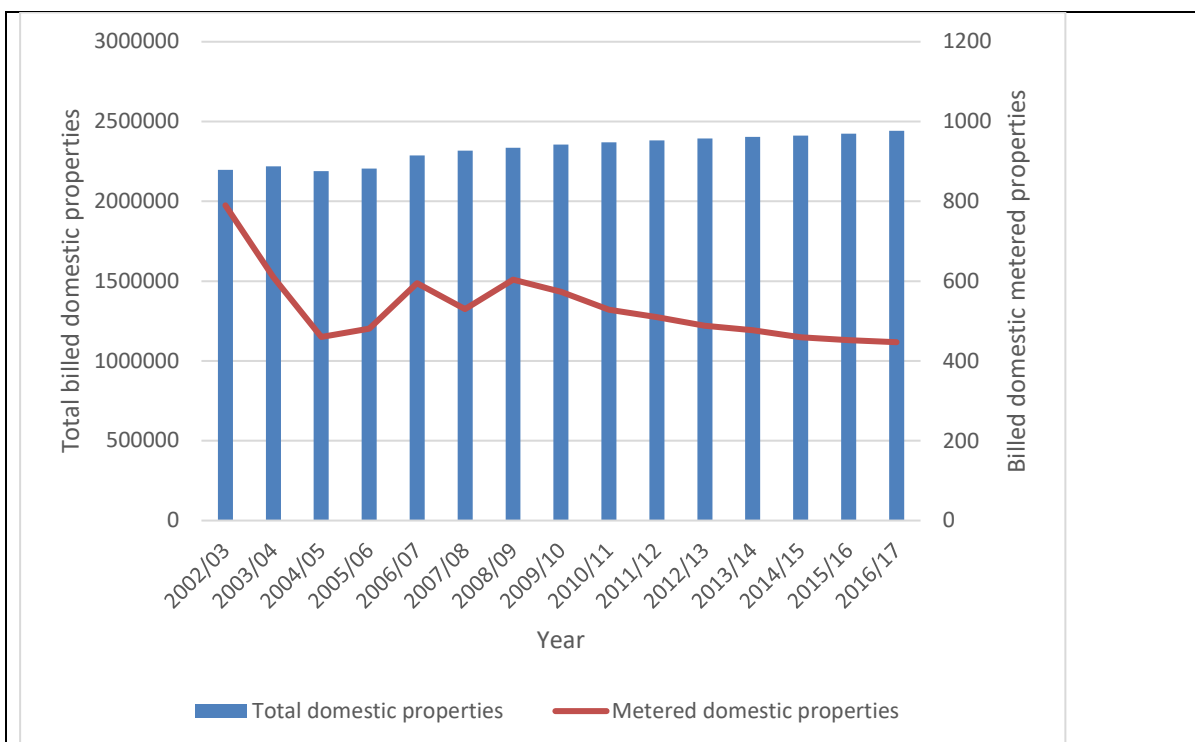
Metering is considered one way to manage demand for water. In Scotland very few domestic properties have water meters installed – less than 500 out of 2.4 million properties, compared to approximately 45% of domestic properties in England (ASC, 2016b).

However, while metering is not promoted in Scotland, there are a number of ongoing and planned measures to improve efficiency and reduce water consumption (Scottish Water, 2011; Scottish Government, 2017).

#### What is happening now?

In 2016/17, out of 2.4 million billed domestic properties, 447 were metered (Scottish Water, 2017a).

<sup>1</sup> Indicator BW8 Domestic water use



**Chart 1** Uptake of metering by billed domestic properties, 2002/03 to 2016/17

Source: Scottish Water's Annual Returns to the Water Industry Commission for Scotland

The number of metered properties has remained very low throughout the period, and has fallen year on year since 2008/09 although this decline has levelled off over the last three years.

| Year    | Unmetered domestic properties | Metered domestic properties | Total domestic properties |
|---------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2002/03 | 2,196,960                     | 790                         | 2,197,750                 |
| 2003/04 | 2,218,429                     | 610                         | 2,219,039                 |
| 2004/05 | 2,189,396                     | 460                         | 2,189,856                 |
| 2005/06 | 2,205,319                     | 481                         | 2,205,800                 |
| 2006/07 | 2,287,706                     | 595                         | 2,288,301                 |
| 2007/08 | 2,317,718                     | 530                         | 2,318,248                 |
| 2008/09 | 2,335,284                     | 604                         | 2,335,888                 |
| 2009/10 | 2,354,891                     | 573                         | 2,355,464                 |
| 2010/11 | 2,369,860                     | 528                         | 2,370,388                 |
| 2011/12 | 2,382,151                     | 510                         | 2,382,661                 |
| 2012/13 | 2,394,277                     | 488                         | 2,394,765                 |

|         |           |     |           |
|---------|-----------|-----|-----------|
| 2013/14 | 2,402,987 | 477 | 2,403,464 |
| 2014/15 | 2411359   | 459 | 2411818   |
| 2015/16 | 2423640   | 452 | 2424092   |
| 2016/17 | 2441856   | 447 | 2442303   |

**Table 1** Number of metered and unmetered domestic properties

Source: Scottish Water's Annual Returns to the Water Industry Commission for Scotland

Scottish Water is implementing a number of measures to reduce water consumption. These include:

Water Efficiency Trial

The trial included 2,000 households. Water meters were installed to record the impact of various measures/combinations of measures upon water usage. These measures included advice on reducing water consumption, installation of water efficient devices, and financial incentives. Following analysis of the data, a report will be produced in autumn 2018.

Water Saving Pack Project

Between 2017 and 2021, Scottish Water is engaging with 2% of Scottish householders through distribution of 49,000 water saving packs, that include an advice brochure and, depending on suitability, water efficiency devices. The packs are delivered in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust who manage Home Energy Scotland, the customer facing brand of the Scottish Government's energy efficiency programmes. Their network of energy advisors provide both water efficiency and energy advice. Scottish Water hopes to scale up this programme in their next business plan.

Since 2013, Scottish building regulations mandate water efficiency measures for new buildings and new work to existing buildings (Scottish Government, 2017).

## References

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## Acknowledgements

Information presented in this document was provided by Scottish Water.

## Appendix One: Briefing note meta data and methodology

**Table 1: Meta data**

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  |   |
| <b>Title of the indicator</b>  | Uptake of water metering by domestic properties   |
| <b>Indicator contact:</b> Organisation or individual/s responsible for the indicator | Ruth Monfries, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh/ClimateXChange  |
| <b>Indicator data source</b>   | Scottish Water Annual Returns to the Water Industry Commission for Scotland   |
| <b>Data link:</b> URL for retrieving the indicator primary indicator data.           | <a href="https://www.watercommission.co.uk/view_Regulatory_data.aspx">https://www.watercommission.co.uk/view_Regulatory_data.aspx</a> |

**Table 2: Data**

|   | Data                       |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Temporal coverage:</b> Start and end dates, identifying any significant data gaps.                       | 2002/3 to 2016/17          |
| <b>Frequency of updates:</b> Planned or potential updates   | Annual                     |
| <b>Spatial coverage:</b> Maximum area for which data is available   | Scotland                   |
| <b>Uncertainties:</b> Uncertainty issues arising from e.g. data collection, aggregation of data, data gaps. |                            |
| <b>Spatial resolution:</b> Scale/unit for which data is collected.  | Billed domestic properties |
| <b>Categorical resolution</b> Potential for disaggregation of data into categories.                         |                            |
| <b>Data accessibility:</b> Restrictions on usage, relevant terms & conditions.                              | Publicly available data    |

**Table 3 Contributing data sources**

**Contributing data sources**

Data sets used to create the indicator data, the organisation responsible for them and any URLs which provide access to the data.

none

**Table 4 Methodology****Briefing methodology**

The methodology used to create the briefing

The briefing is derived from data supplied to the Water Industry Commission for Scotland in Scottish Water's Annual Return tables.