

## Briefing

# Preparing for retail market opening in the water industry: Impacts for the Commercial Drainage and Water Enquiry

6<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**From April 2017, all non-household customers in England will be able to choose their supplier of water and sewerage retail services. This is a result of a change in the law under the Water Act 2014, designed to introduce competition into the water industry.**

Whilst existing water companies will still own and maintain water and sewerage networks, services including billing, handling customer queries and complaints, and meter reading will be provided by a number of different companies (see [www.open-water.org.uk/](http://www.open-water.org.uk/)).

This change will have an impact on the Commercial Drainage and Water Enquiry (CommercialDW). From April 2017, this will affect the answers to the following questions:

- *Is a surface water drainage charge payable?*
- *Who bills the property for sewerage services?*
- *Who bills the property for water services?*

With surface water, the Enquiry will continue to indicate whether or not surface water discharges to a public sewer. Where such connections exist, a drainage charge may be applicable.

With regard to who bills a property, the existing owner should be in a position to let you know who the current retailer is. A full list of potential retailers is available at [www.open-water.org.uk/for-customers/find a supplier/](http://www.open-water.org.uk/for-customers/find-a-supplier/)

It also means that the current question:

*What is the current basis for charging for sewerage and water services at the property?*

Will be replaced by the question:

*Is there a meter installed at this property?*

All the other information usually contained in your CommercialDW Enquiry will remain as comprehensive as it is currently.

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### Notes for editors

- The Drainage and Water Searches Network (DWSN) is a membership organisation for companies or group companies who are responsible for compiling full and complete responses to the Law Society's CON29DW Enquiry or the Commercial Drainage and Water Enquiry (CommercialDW).
- The CommercialDW provides comprehensive information regarding the water supply and sewerage assets for non-household properties.