
Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham B5 4UA
21 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3HF

Mr Huw Merriman
MP for Bexhill and Battle
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

19 March 2018

Dear Mr Merriman

Water supply issues – Bexhill and Battle

Thank you for your letter of 6 March on behalf of your constituents of Bexhill and Battle.

I appreciate the deep distress and concern the recent supply interruptions have caused and the detrimental impact they have had on households, businesses and schools.

As you can imagine, we are as disappointed as you are with the recent supply interruptions.

Of course, we understand that the recent cold weather has had an impact on pipes and resulted in some of the bursts. But water companies have been warned time and again that they need to be better at planning ahead to deal with these situations.

I understand that water has been restored to all homes in the South East Water service area. That being the case we can now move to find out what happened, why and what can be done to stop it happening again. That is why we are launching a thorough review to:

- establish the total extent of supply shortages experienced by customers;
 - evaluate water companies' preparedness in the run up to the recent period of cold weather, including whether they planned ahead sufficiently to ensure they had in place the right resources and processes;
 - examine the quality of the support provided to customers, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances;
 - look at the way in which companies communicated with affected customers;
- and,

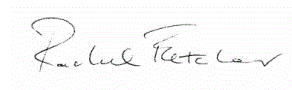
- consider carefully the adequacy of the compensation that companies are offering affected customers.

Once the review is concluded, we will look closely if any other action is needed and won't hesitate to use our powers, if necessary. Given your interest in this matter, we will send you a copy of the review once it is completed.

In the meantime, South East Water has provided information regarding compensation – should this be useful for constituents, the link is here:
<https://www.southeastwater.co.uk/my-water-supply/water-supply-problems-across-the-south-east>

I understand that this has been a deeply distressing time for you and your constituents. I do hope this has helped to address yours and your constituents' concerns. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Fletcher
Chief Executive, Ofwat