

WATER SERVICES ETC. (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part 2: Provision of Water and Sewerage Services

Scottish Water: services via licensed providers

Section 17: Continuation of water services

76. Section 17 makes provision in relation to Scottish Water's duty to provide water services, when the arrangements between a licensed water services provider and the occupier of eligible premises have come to an end.
77. Subsection (1) provides that where the arrangements between the occupier of an eligible premises (as defined in section 27 of the Act) and a water services provider have come to an end, such as, for example, on revocation of a licence, Scottish Water has a continuing duty to supply water to the premises for the period specified in subsection (2). The only exception to this is where the supply is discontinued at the request of a provider under section 18 of the Act where alternative arrangements apply. This is to enable the customers of licensed providers to have a continued supply of water while they seek to secure services from an alternative licensed provider if their arrangement with their existing provider comes to an end for any other reason than those provided in the disconnection code under section 19. In most cases it is anticipated that a customer will be able to make arrangements with a new provider prior to the arrangements with their previous provider having come to an end.
78. Subsection (2) specifies the period for which Scottish Water must continue to supply water, after arrangements between the occupier of premises and a provider have come to an end, as two months or such longer period as Scottish Water agrees to.
79. Subsection (3) provides that the continuing duty to supply under subsection (1), that is to say, in the absence of an agreement between the occupier and a provider, ceases where a new arrangement has been made between a licensed provider and the occupier of eligible premises, which would lead to a new duty under section 16(2) of the Act, or where the occupier of those premises notifies Scottish Water that a supply of water is no longer required.
80. Subsection (4) amends section 9 of the Water (Scotland) Act 1980, by inserting new subsections (2A) to (2C). Section 9(1) of the 1980 Act requires Scottish Water to supply water on reasonable terms and conditions where requested for non-domestic purposes. The new section 9(2A) qualifies the section 9(1) duty so that Scottish Water is not required to make such a supply where arrangements between a licensed provider and the occupier of eligible premises under section 16(2) of the Act have come to an end, where it believes there is no reasonable prospect of recovering charges from a customer. The requirement to supply water for non-domestic purposes can only come to an end if the arrangements between a licensed provider and a customer have ended because of non-payment of charges (section 9(2A)(a) of the 1980 Act), or the supply of water to a premises has been discontinued at the request of the provider (under section 18(5) of

*These notes relate to the Water Services etc. (Scotland) Act
2005 (asp 3) which received Royal Assent on 17 March 2005*

the Act) because of non-payment of charges (section 9(2A)(b) of the 1980 Act). The intention of this provision is to ensure that, where a customer is unable to find a water service provider, for example, because of a track record of not paying bills, that Scottish Water should not be required to provide a supply of water to that customer. The new section 9(2B) of the 1980 Act provides that where Scottish Water refuses to provide such a supply, the occupier of the premises has a right to have this reviewed by the Water Industry Commission which, in terms of the new section 9(2C) of the 1980 Act, can either confirm the decision to refuse or direct Scottish Water to give a supply, and its decision is final.