

Water Utility Consumer Assistance Trust

(WUCAT)

Information Sheet

The Water Utility Consumer Assistance Trust (WUCAT) helps with debt reduction to Watercare customers who are struggling to manage their water and/or wastewater bills.

Eligibility:

- Residential property owners (must reside in the property) or tenants are able to apply.
- There must be a debt to Watercare (not to a landlord or Property Owner)
- Have not received assistance from WUCAT in the previous 18 months.
- Application form **must be** completed by a Financial Mentor/Budget Advisor OR submit an **up to date household budget** (no more than three months old) with the application form. The budget advisor may make a recommendation on payments and/or write-offs.
- Are prepared to commit to a payment plan to cover future Watercare monthly bills.
- Have not refused to pay the Watercare account.
- May be asked to make payments via Work & Income redirection (if applicable).
- Are prepared to work with the Trust regarding possible water leaks if identified.

How it works:

- Once the application is received, Watercare are advised and this puts a hold on any additional non-payment charges or water restriction texts.
- The application is discussed at the monthly Trust meeting (held second Wednesday of each month).
- A payment plan is set up to meet future monthly Watercare invoices (i.e. if the monthly invoice is \$100 payments of \$25 per week are likely to be requested). The average monthly amount is assessed from the previous 12 month Watercare invoices.
- The debt to Watercare can be written off. The amounts and timing of this depends on the debt and previous payments to Watercare.
- WUCAT may ask for a free water audit to be carried out if the bills appear high for the number of occupants.
- WUCAT may be able to assist with plumbing repairs following the water audit.
- WUCAT have information sheets on ways to save water, carrying out a leak test and other water saving incentives.

If you need to discuss any of the above, please contact The Trust Administrator on 0800 625 8176, email info@waterassistance.org.nz or message through our Facebook page Water Utility Consumer Assistance Trust.