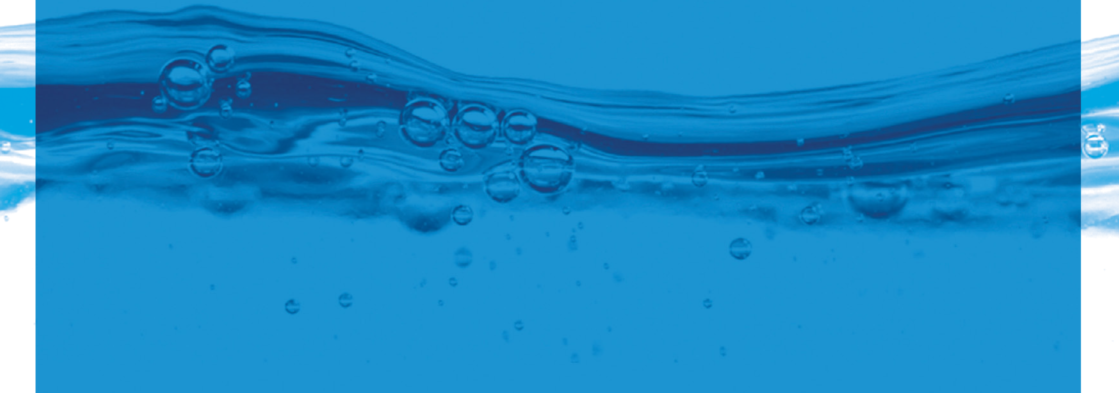
# Transforming water services in Ireland

## A guide to the establishment of Irish Water



BORD GÁIS

Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government

# The need for water reform

**Irish Water is the new public water authority that is in the process of being established. The following information outlines the reasons for creating Irish Water and the benefits it will deliver to water users.**

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At present, our water system provides a good service for the vast majority of us. However, while Ireland has an abundance of water resources, the cost of providing treated drinking water and the collection and treatment of our wastewater is expensive. It costs about €1.2 billion per year to run the current system, with most of this funding coming from State sources.

In April 2012, the Government announced that it would create a publicly owned national water authority to manage and improve the delivery of water and wastewater services in Ireland. This new water authority, Irish Water, will enhance the current system in which public water and wastewater services are delivered separately by 34 Local Authorities. The creation of a national water authority has many benefits. Most importantly, this new approach will facilitate increased investment into the system, resulting in better water services. High quality water services benefit households, and importantly, help position Ireland as an attractive country in which to locate industries with high water usage such as agri-food, pharmaceuticals and technology.

> Water services currently provided by 34 Local Authorities will be replaced by one national authority

Global demand for water is expected to rise by 40% over the next 20 years, so investment in water infrastructure will ensure that Ireland is well positioned to attract foreign and indigenous investment, creating real potential for new jobs within the country.

The Government has decided to establish the new water authority within the Bord Gáis Group. Bord Gáis has extensive experience of managing a national gas network and will bring these skills to managing the establishment and ongoing operations of the new public water authority. In addition, Bord Gáis has an excellent track record for delivering customer care and attracting international finance.

The expertise of Bord Gáis will be paired with the knowledge and experience of Local Authorities to create a company with the capacity to deliver world class water services.

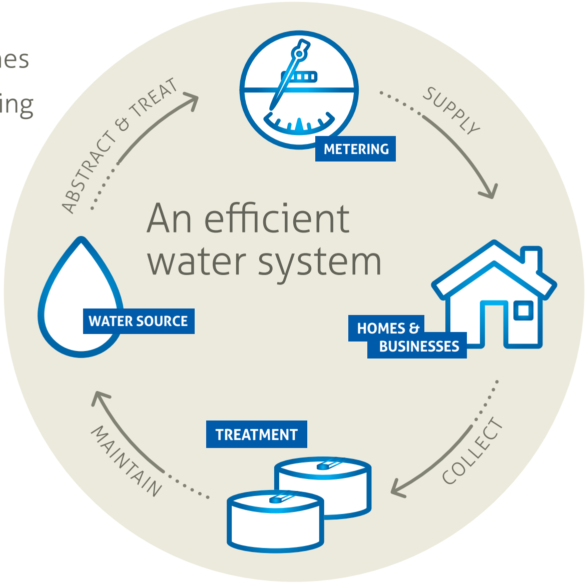
Setting up Irish Water is a complex task and will be undertaken in several phases up to 2017. The first step along this path is the introduction of interim legislation to give Irish Water a legal basis. This leaflet details how you will be affected by the changes to water services provision. It is important to note that although meter installation to measure water usage will commence in 2013, **no household on the public water system will be asked to pay water charges before 2014.**

## What will Irish Water do?

The new water authority will have full responsibility for delivering services to public water users, including:

- Abstracting and treating water, delivering water to homes and businesses, collecting and treating wastewater and discharging treated wastewater back into the environment
- Installing domestic water meters across the country, billing domestic and business customers, providing customer services
- Raising finance internationally to fund capital investment programmes
- Maintaining, operating and upgrading our water infrastructure

Essentially, Irish Water will be responsible for the water and wastewater services that the Local Authorities provide today, but as a cohesive organisation, it will be able to take a strategic, national approach to planning, development, raising finance, investment and operations. This will enhance the quality of water services, improve the efficiency of the water system and reduce operating costs.




*Irish Water aims to provide enhanced services with improved efficiency and reduced operating costs.*



## How will you benefit?

The creation of Irish Water will provide:

- New jobs through upgrading the water system, fixing the leaks, installing meters and creating a customer service centre
- A more reliable water system that can respond to extreme weather conditions and population growth
- Improved and safer water services through increased investment
- Investment to ensure that water services meet the growing needs of the business sector and that, in particular, industries with high employment potential (e.g. agri-food, pharmaceutical and IT) have sufficient quality and quantity of water services. This will assist in attracting Foreign Direct Investment in these areas
- A more focussed effort and increased investment to reduce leaks – currently about 42% of our water leaks from the pipes, creating wastage and unnecessary costs
- Improved water conservation, as the meter records how much water has been supplied to your home, allowing you to minimise your impact on the environment
- Enhanced water and wastewater quality standards in line with national and European compliance requirements
- A more cost-efficient water system that can deliver economies of scale

## Will you be a customer?

Irish Water will serve the needs of anyone who depends on the public water system for their water supply and/or wastewater collection.

| Water supplied by | Wastewater | Are you a customer? |
|---|---|---|
| Public Mains | Public Sewer | **YES** |
| Public Mains | Own Treatment* | **YES** |
| Group Water Scheme | Public Sewer | **YES** |
| Group Water Scheme | Own Treatment* | NO |
| Private Well | Public Sewer | **YES** |
| Private Well | Own Treatment* | NO |

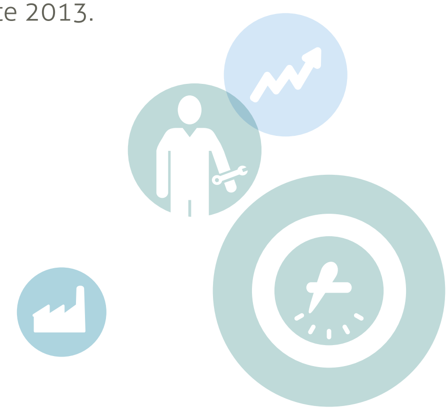
*Own Treatment : Septic tank or wastewater treatment system.



## Water charges

We are the only country in the OECD where households do not pay directly for the water they use. Ireland has a plentiful supply of water; our challenge is to ensure that we have a modern national water system to deliver water services to users in a cost efficient and environmentally friendly manner. To support this, domestic water charges will be introduced. **No household on the public water system will be asked to pay water charges before 2014.**

No decision has been made yet in relation to how much the water charge for domestic users will be. This will be decided by the new water regulator, the Commission for Energy Regulation, in late 2013.



## Water meters

One of the water authority's first tasks will be to install domestic water meters countrywide as soon as possible (although, for technical reasons, some properties will not be suitable for meter installation in the current phase). Many countries have found meters to be the fairest way of charging for water and the best way to improve the efficiency of a water network. Installation work will begin in mid 2013 and over one million homes will be fitted with meters, creating up to 2,000 jobs in the process.



International experience suggests the introduction of water meters can achieve a reduction in consumption of at least 10%

# Next steps

**It will take a number of years to fully establish the new water authority. The introduction of interim legislation in early 2013 will formally establish Irish Water, after which the following activities will take place:**

**Phase 1**
*Local Authority Surveys*

Local Authorities are undertaking surveys of water assets in order to gather information to support the roll-out of water meters, such as identifying where the connection from the mains water supply is connected to each property.

There will be no disruption to your supply during this phase, nor will the survey staff need to enter your property. Surveyors may need to photograph the location of any existing stopcock (a valve located in water pipes). The taking of such photos will be unintrusive and respect your right to privacy. The Local Authorities will provide further communication within their local areas before surveys commence.

**Phase 2***
*Installation of Boundary Boxes*

From mid 2013, using the information gathered by the Local Authority surveys, Irish Water will install boundary boxes, also known as meter boxes. These boxes will be located underground, on the public side of your boundary/fence. Your water meter will be housed inside the boundary box.

**Phase 3***
*Installation of Water Meters*

From mid 2013, Irish Water will begin installing domestic water meters within boundary boxes across the country.

**Phase 4**
*Customer Contact*

Before billing commences, Irish Water will contact you to ensure that it has the correct details to bill you accurately.

**Phase 5**
*Billing Starts*

From 2014, if you are a user of the public water system and therefore a customer of Irish Water, you will start to receive bills for the water services you use. You will not be asked to pay anything in advance of this. More information on charges and when billing will start will be announced at a later point.

* *There will be no upfront charge for the installation of boundary boxes and water meters.* ***No household on the public water system will be asked to pay water charges before 2014.***

For further information, contact Bord Gáis helpline, on **1850 278 278**







# Na chéad chéimeanna eile

**Tógfaidh séroinnt blianta leis an údarás nua uisce a bhunú go hiomlán. Trí reachtaíocht eatramhach a thabhairt isteach go luath i 2013, cuirfear Uisce Éireann ar bun go foirmiúil, agus ina dhiaidh sin, tarlóidh na gníomhaíochtaí seo a leanas:**

**Céim 1**
*Suirbhéanna Údarás Áitiúil*

Tá Údaráis Áitiúla ag déanamh suirbhéanna ar acmhainní uisce le faisnéis a bhailiú chun soláthar mhéadair uisce a thacú, mar an áit a aithint ina bhfuil an nasc ón soláthar uisce príomhlíonra nasctha le gach foirgneamh.

Ní bheidh aon bhriseadh isteach ar do sholáthar le linn na céime seo, agus ní bheidh ar fhoireann suirbhéireachta dul isteach i do theach. Seans go mbeidh ar shuirbhéirí grianghrafa thógáilde láthair buacaire (comhla atá le fáil i bpíopaí uisce) reatha ar bith atá ann. Ní chuirfidh tógáil grianghraf dá leithéid sin isteach ort agus tabharfar meas ar an gceart atá agat chun príobháideachta. Soláthróidh na hÚdaráis Áitiúla tuilleadh cumarsáide laistigh dá gceantair áitiúla féin sula gcuirfear tús le suirbhéanna.

**Céim 2***
*Boscaí Teoranna Shuiteáil*

Ó lár 2013, trí húsáid a bhaint as an eolas a bailíodh i suirbhéanna Údarás Áitiúil, suiteálfaidh Uisce Éireann boscaíteorann, ar a dtugtar méadair uisce freisin. Beidh na boscaí seo suite faoin talamh, ar an taobh poiblí de do theorann/d'fhál. Beidh do mhéadar uisce suite laistigh den bhosca teorann.

**Céim 3***
*Méadair Uisce a Shuiteáil*

Ó lár 2013 ar aghaidh, cuirfidh Uisce Éireann tús le méadair uisce theaghlaigh a shuiteáil laistigh de bhoscaí méadar uisce ar fud na tíre.

**Céim 4**
*Teagmháil le Custaiméirí*

Sula gcuirfear tús le billeáil, beidh Uisce Éireann i dteagmháil leat le cinntiú go bhfuil na sonraí cearta aige chun tú a bhilleáil go cruinn.

**Céim 5**
*Tús le billeáil teaghlaigh*

Ó 2014 ar aghaidh, más úsáideoir den chóras uisce poiblí tú agus, dá bhrí sin, más custaiméir de chuid Uisce Éireann tú, gheobhaidh tú billí den chéad uair le haghaidh na seirbhísí uisce a úsáideann tú. Ní iarrfar ort aon rud a íoc roimhe sin. Fógrófar tuilleadh faisnéise ar tháillí agus ar an dáta ar a chuirfear tús le billeáil sa todhchaí.

* *Ní bheidh táille le híoc ar an bpointemaidir le boscaí méadar uisce agus mdair uisce a shuiteáil.* ***Ní iarrfar ar aon teaghlach ar an gcóras uisce poiblí táillí uisce a íoc roimh 2014.***

Le tuilleadh faisnéise a fháil, téigh i dteagmháil le líne chabhrach Bhord Gáis, ar **1850 278 278**

## An mbeidh tú i do chustaiméir?

Beidh Uisce Éireann ag freastal ar riachtanais duine ar bith atá ag brath ar chóras uisce poiblí le haghaidh a soláthair uisce agus/nó le haghaidh bhailiú fuíolluisce.

| Uisce soláthraithe ag | Fuíolluisce | An custaiméir tú? |
|---|---|---|
| Príomlíonra Poiblí | Séarach Poiblí | **IS EA** |
| Príomlíonra Poiblí | Féinchóireáil* | **IS EA** |
| Grúpscéim Uisce | Séarach Poiblí | **IS EA** |
| Grúpscéim Uisce | Féinchóireáil* | NÍ HEA |
| Tobar Príobháideach | Séarach Poiblí | **IS EA** |
| Tobar Príobháideach | Féinchóireáil* | NÍ HEA |

*Féinchóireáil: Umar Seipteach nó córas cóireála fuíolluisce.



## Táillí uisce

Is í Éire an t-aon tír amháin sa ECFE (an Eagraíocht um Chomhar agus Fhorbairt Eacnamaíochta) áit nach mbíonn ar theaghlaigh íoc go díreach as an uisce a úsáideann siad. Tá soláthar flúirseach uisce ag Éirinn; is é an dúshlán atá romhainn náinntiú go mbeidh córas uisce náisiúnta nua-aimseartha againn chun seirbhísí uisce a sheachadadh d'úsáideoirí ar bhealach a bheidh cost-éifeachtúil agus nach ndéanfaidh dochar don chomhshaol. Chun tacú leis seo, tabharfar isteach táillí uisce teaghlaigh. **Ní iarrfar ar aon teaghlach ar an gcóras uisce poiblí aon táillí uisce a íoc roimh 2014.**

Ní dhearnadh aon chinneadh fós maidir le méid an táille uisce a bheidh le híoc ag úsáideoirí teaghlaigh. Is é an rialtóir uisce nua, an Coimisinéir um Rialáil Fuinnimh, a dhéanfaidh an cinneadh seo go déanach i 2013.

## Méadair uisce

Ar cheann de chéad tascanna an údaráis uisce beidh méadair uisce theaghlaigh a shuiteáil ar fud na tíre a luaithe is féidir (cé nach mbeidh roinnt foirgneamh oiriúnach don suiteáil mhéadar sa chéim reatha ar chúiseanna teicniúla). Fuair a lán tíortha gurb iad méadair an bealach is cothroime le táillí a ghearradh as uisce, agus iad mar an dóigh is fearr chun éifeachtúlacht líonra uisce a fheabhsú. Cuirfear tús le hobair shuiteála i lár 2013, agus suiteálfar méadair i mbreis agus milliún teach, agus suas le 2,000 post á gcruthú freisin.

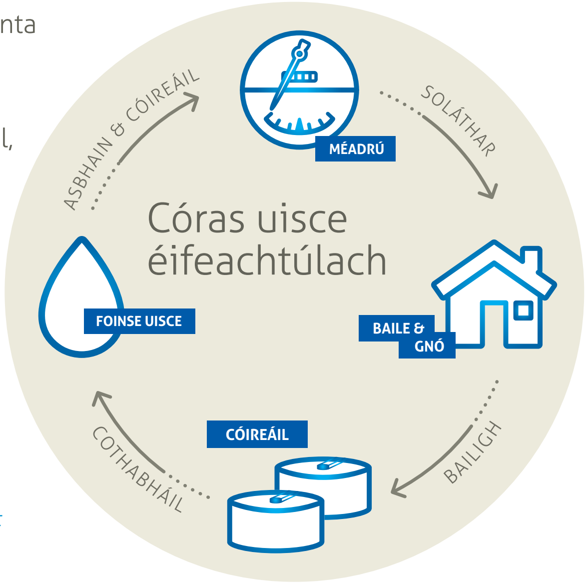
Tá fianaise ann ó eispéireas idirnáisiúnta gur féidir laghdú in úsáid de 10% ar a laghad a bhaint amach mar gheall ar mhéadair uisce a thabhairt isteach

## Céard a dhéanfaidh Uisce Éireann?

Beidh freagracht iomlán ag an údarás uisce nua as seirbhísí a sheachadadh d'úsáideoirí uisce poiblí, lena n-áirítear:

- Uisce a asbhaint agus a chóireáil; uisce a sheachadadh do thithe agus do ghnóthais; fuíolluisce a bhailiú agus a chóireáil agus fuíolluisce cóireáilte a scaoileadh ar ais sa chomhshaol
- Méadair uisce theaghlaigh a shuiteáil ar fud na tíre, custaiméirí teaghlaigh agus gnó a bhilleáil; seirbhísí do chustaiméirí a sholáthar
- Maoiniú a chruinniú go hidirnáisiúnta chun cláir infheistíochta caipitil a mhaoiniú
- Ár mbonneagar uisce a chothabháil, a oibriú agus a uasghrádú

Tríd is tríd, beidh Uisce Éireann freagrach as na seirbhísí uisce agus fuíolluisce a sholáthraíonn na hÚdaráis Áitiúla faoi láthair ach, mar eagraíocht chomhtháite beidh sé in ann cur chuige straitéiseach náisiúnta a ghlacadh maidir le pleanáil, forbairt, maoiniú a chruinniú, infheistíocht agus oibríochtaí. Cuirfidh sé seo feabhas ar cháilíocht na seirbhísí uisce agus ar éifeachtúlacht an chórais uisce, agus laghdóidh sé costais oibriúcháin.




*Tá Uisce Éireann ag iarraidh seirbhísí feabhsaithe a sholáthar i dteannta le héifeachtúlacht fheabhsaithe agus costais oibriúcháin laghdaithe.*



## Cén tairbhí a bhainfidh tusa as?

Trí Uisce Éireann a chruthú, soláthrófar:

- Poist nua tríd an gcóras uisce a uasghrádú, na sceitheanna a dheisiú, méadair a shuiteáil agus ionad seirbhíse custaiméirí a chruthú
- Córas uisce níos iontaofa atá in ann adhaimsir agus fás sa daonra a sheasamh
- Seirbhísí uisce feabhsaithe agus níos sábháilte trí hinfheistíocht mhéadaithe
- Infheistíocht le cinntiú go gcomhlíonfaidh seirbhísí uisce riachtanais na hearnála gnó, agus go háirithe le cinntiú go mbeidh seirbhísí uisce dóthanacha i dtaca le cáilíocht agus méid ag tionscail a bhfuil ardacmhainn fhostaíochta acu (m.sh. agraibhia, cógaisíocht agus TF). Cuideoidh sé sin le hInfheistíocht Dhíreach Eachtrach a mhealladh sna réimsí sin
- Iarracht níos spriocdhírithe agus infheistíocht mhéadaithe chun sceitheanna a laghdú – faoi láthair sceitheann thart ar 42% dár n-uisce as na píopaí, rud a chruthaíonn diomailt agus costais neamhriachtanacha
- Caomhnú uisce feabhsaithe, de thairbhe go ndéanann an méadar taifead ar a méid uisce a soláthraíodh do do theach, rud a ligfidh duit do thionchar ar an gcomhshaol a íoslaghdú
- Caighdeáin níos fearr um cháilíocht uisce agus fuíolluisce de réir ceanglascomhlíontachta náisiúnta agus Eorpach
- Córas uisce níos cost-éifeachtúla atá in ann barainneachtaí scála a sheachadadh

**Is é Uisce Éireann, an t-údarás uisce poiblí nua atá á bhunú faoi láthair. Leagtar amach san fhaisnéis seo a leanas na cúiseanna le hUisce Éireann a bhunú agus na tairbhí a bheidh ann d'úsáideoirí uisce.**

**Clár Ábhair**


- Ag bunathrú seirbhísí uisce in Éirinn – an riachtanas um athchóiriúuisce
- Céard a dhéanfaidh Uisce Éireann?
- Cén tairbhí a bhainfidh tusa as?
- An mbeidh tú i do chustaiméir?
- Táillí uisce
- Méadair uisce
- Na chéad chéimeanna eile


# An riachtanas le huisce a athchóiriú

Faoi láthair, soláthraíonn ár gcóras uisce seirbhís mhaith don chuid is mó de mhuintir na hÉireann. Ach, cé go bhfuil go leor acmhainní uisce ag Éirinn, tá an-chostas i gceist le huisce óil cóireáilte a sholáthar agus lenár bhfuíolluisce a bhailiú agus a chóireáil. Tá costas de thart ar €1.2 billiún in aghaidh na bliana i gceist chun an córas reatha a fheidhmiú, agus an chuid is mó den mhaoiniú seo ag teacht ó fhoinsí an Stáit.

In Aibreán 2012, d'fhógair an Rialtas go gcruthódh sé údarás náisiúnta uisce faoi úinéireacht phoiblí chun seachadadh de sheirbhísí uisce agus fuíolluisce in Éirinn a bhainistiú agus a fheabhsú. Cuirfear an t-údarás uisce nua seo, Uisce Éireann, feabhas ar an gcóras reatha ina sheachadann 34 Údarás Áitiúla seirbhísí uisce poiblí agus fuíolluisce go leithleach. Tá a lán tairbhí i gceist le húdarás náisiúnta uisce a chruthú . Is é an rud is tábhachtaí ná go n-éascóidh an cur chuige nua seo infheistíocht mhéadaithe sa chóras,agus seirbhísí uisce de cháilíocht níos fearr mar thoradh air sin. Bíonn tairbhe le baint ag teaghlaigh as seirbhísí uisce ardchaighdeáin agus go tábhachtach tá siad ina gcuidiú i dtaca le tír tharraingteach a dhéanamh d'Eirinn maidir le tionscail a bhfuil úsáid ard uisce acu, amhail tionscail agraibhia, cógaisíochta agus teicneolaíochta. D'fhéadfaí ag súil go méadófar an t-éileamh domhanda ar uisce ag 40% laistigh de 20 bliain, mar sin cinnteoidh infheistíocht san infreastruchtúr uisce go bhfuil Éire suite go maith infheistíocht eachtrach agus dúchais a mhealladh, rud a chruthóidh fíorphoitéinseal i dtaca le poist nua sa tír.

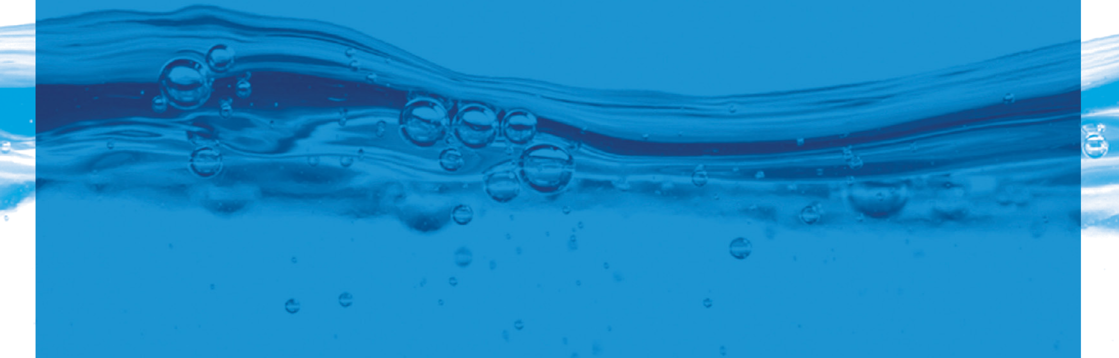
> Cuirfear údarás náisiúnta amháin in ionad na 34 hÚdarás Áitiúla a sholáthraíonn seirbhís uisce faoi láthair.

Shocraigh an Rialtas ant-údarás nua uisce a bhunú laistigh de Ghrúpa Bhord Gáis. Tá taithí fhairsing ag Bord Gáis maidir le líonra náisiúnta gáis a bhainistiú agus cuirfidh sé na scileanna sin i bhfeidhm chun oibríochtaí leanúnacha den 'údarás uisce poiblí nua a bhainistiú. Ina theannta sin, tá teistshuntasach ag Bord Gáis i dtaca le cúram do chustaiméirí a sheachadadh agus maoiniú idirnáisiúnta a mhealladh. Cuirfear saineolas Bhord Gáis leis an eolas agus an taithí maidir le sheirbhísí uisce a sholáthar laistigh d'Údaráis Áitiúla chun cuideachta a chruthú a mbeidh an cumas aici eirbhísí uisce den scoth a sheachadadh.

Tá obair chasta ag baint le hUisce Éireann a bhunú agus déanfar é céim i ndiaidh céime suas go 2017. Is é seoladh reachtaíocht eatramhach chun bunús dlí a thabhairt d'Uisce Éireann an chéad chéim sa phróiseas seo. Tugtar sonraí sa bhileog seo ar an dóigh a rachaidh na hathruithe ar sholáthar seirbhísí uisce i bhfeidhm ort. Tá sé tábhachtach tabhairt do d'aire **nach n-iarrfar ar aon teaghlach ar an gcóras uisce poiblí táillí uisce a íoc roimh 2014,** cé go gcuirfear tús le suiteáil na méadar chun úsáid uisce a thomhas sa bhliain 2013.

# Ag bunathrú seirbhísí uisce in Éirinn

## Treoir ar bhunú d'Uisce Éireann



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