

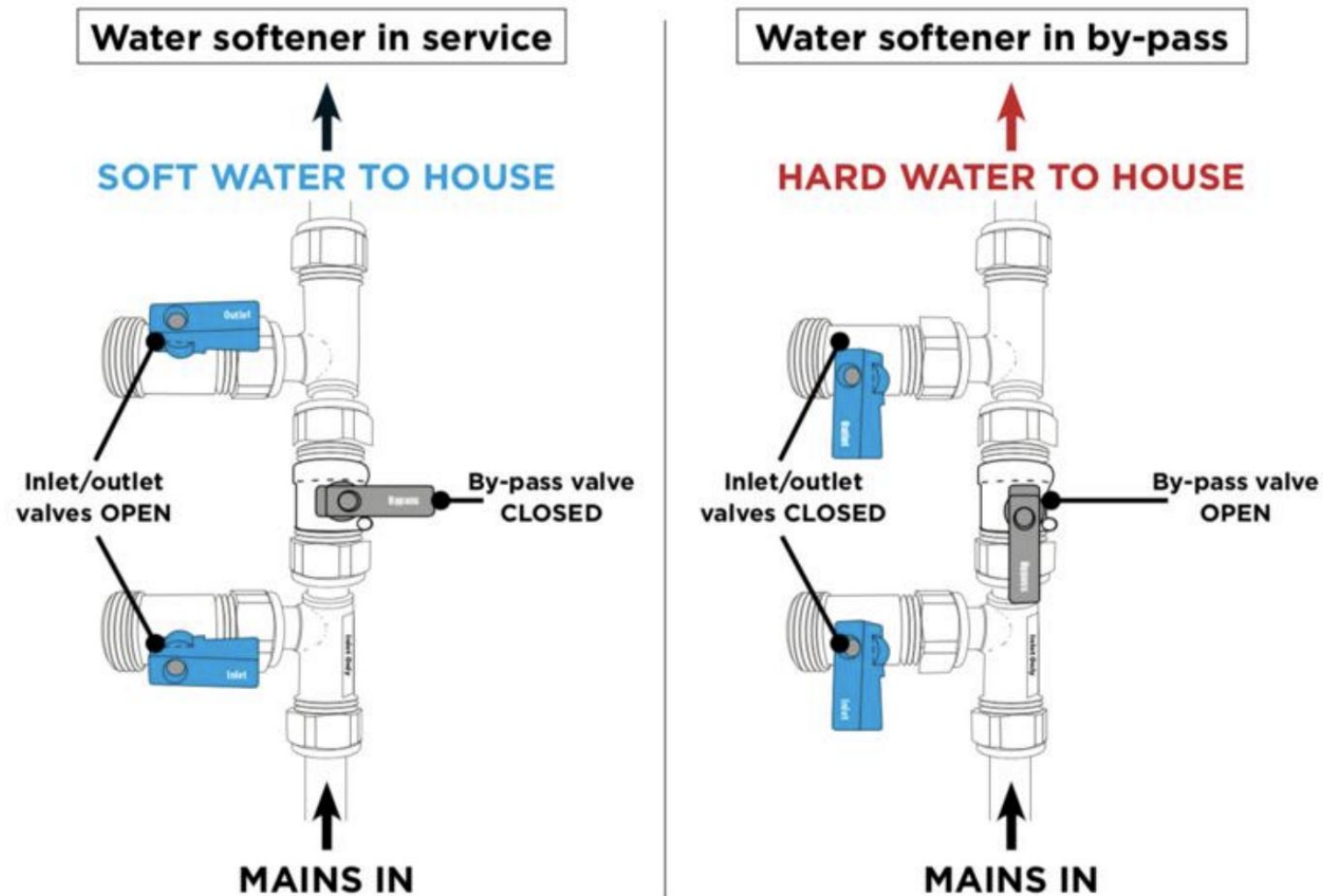
Troubleshooting Guide

In this guide I've compiled a list of the most common issues I come across and how to resolve them yourself and avoid an unnecessary call out.

Remember, don't be so quick to blame your water softener. You never know what the cause is until you troubleshoot!



The softener by-pass



How to by-pass your softener

To by-pass your softener, follow the hoses from the water softener back to the plumbing and put the valves in the by-pass position.

Please be sure to put the valves back into the service position when you have finished.

You may need to by-pass the softener...

- **To do maintenance work**
- **To isolate the softener to fault find**
- **To water the garden**

Hard water

Q: Has your softener been running fine up until now?

A: Yes = continue

A: No = Contact our office on 01243 607494

Q: Have you tested the water?

A: YES = Continue

A: NO = [Watch our video - Hard Vs Soft](#)

Q: Is the softener in by-pass?

A: [Watch our video - How is a water softener installed](#)

Q: Do you have tanks in the loft?

A: NO = Continue

A: YES = Faulty ball valve in the header tank: Replace with a fluid master ONLY

Hard water (continued)

More often than not, the cold supply to your kitchen tap will be hard, so it is important to test elsewhere - such as your bathroom tap.

Ensure the softener is not regenerating when you perform your test. If it is, come back to it at least 20 minutes later.

Have you run out of salt recently? If you have, put salt in and [go to page 30](#)

Have you left your softener in by-pass? [Go to page 2](#)

Have you left people in charge of your home or have you had any work done around the property? [Go to page 2](#)

Hard water (continued)

NO: If it has run out, replenish and test again, allowing 14 days for a true result. To manually regenerate, [see page 28](#)

It will be a lot quicker if it is a combination boiler

YES: Check that they are not stuck to the sides of the cabinet and check that the indentations on the block face are facing front to back of the softener.

You could also remove the blocks, have a look inside and make sure there is no salt crystallisation at the bottom.



[View our article on salt creep: Salt creep](#)

The right salt

Make sure you are using the right salt for your machine.

If you have used any other salt than that recommended by us, for example granular instead of block, then please call us, as we will need to clean out and service your machine.

Office **01243 607494**

Leaks

More often than not we are able to use the current pipe work. If, for any reason, we need to replace, repair or install a by-pass, for example. The work is under guarantee for 12 months, as is Industry standard.

We are not liable for pipe work we have installed after this time.

If the pipe work is leaking and was not replaced by us, again we are not liable for any leaks that occur and a plumber will need to be called.

Leaks from the hoses

The most common leak is from the Inlet hose or from the Outlet hose and **9 out of 10 times it will just need a little tightening up.**

These are the hoses leading from the softener back to your pipe work (by-pass) **Please see page 2.**

Leak from the drain line, which is what connects the softener to the waste pipe or to the outside gully.

TIP: Intermittent leaks are normally linked to waste pipes as they do not hold water, rather the water runs through the pipe periodically.

Water from the overflow

Leaking from the overflow. The overflow pipe will be the pipe that is at the lowest point of all the hoses and pipes, generally exiting through the wall to outside. Sometimes it will be connected to the waste pipework, so just follow the lowest pipe to where it terminates.. If this is either leaking continuously or intermittently, please call the office [01243 607494](tel:01243607494)

Note: With the Kinetico there have been on very rare occasions reports of a phantom leak through the overflow.

Tip: [If there is a kink in any of the hoses leading from the softener these need to be straightened out.](#)

Water in the water softener cabinet – Block salt softeners only * Not tablet salt softeners

Check that the salt is sitting in water. If the softener is making noise it may be regenerating check back in 20 minutes.

If there is no salt, or the salt is not sitting in water, add some to the cabinet, until the water level is approximately 15-20mm or 3/4 of an inch above the platform on which the salt sits. Then, manually regenerate 8 hours later (this is to allow the salt to dissolve into a brine solution).

Manual regeneration [see page 30](#). If you need to keep repeating this process, then you will need to [call us](#).

High salt usage

As a general rule, the average salt usage is 1 block per person per month, although this will vary depending on your water usage – the more water you use the more salt you use!

If you are using more salt than you think, you should then follow the guides in the following pages.

If your garden tap is fed by soft water, then you will use more salt. So when watering the garden, put the softener into by-pass. But just remember to put it back on again.

See [page 2 and 19](#)

[Click here to watch the video on high salt usage.](#)

High salt usage (continued)

Potential leaks:

Check for signs of overflowing loft tanks or toilets (be mindful that modern toilets overflow into the pan).

If you are sure that nothing is leaking or using excess water and you have watched our video on [page 12](#), please give us a call on [01243 607494](tel:01243607494)

High water level– Block salt softeners only

Remove one of the salt blocks and see if the water level is higher than **15 – 20mm** or **¾ of an inch above the salt platform** on which the salt sits. A higher water level will cause the unit to use more salt and even cause salty water. (Salt to service).

If the mains water supply has been turned off, water from your property may have back filled into the water softener cabinet. When you have restored the water supply back to the property and the softener goes into regeneration, the water level should go back to normal.

If the mains water is turned off in the future, put your softener into by-pass or isolate it to prevent it filling up.

High water level- Electric/tablet softener only

If you have a high water level, the chances are that the overflow pipe will be discharging water. If it is, then call the office on [01243 607494](tel:01243607494)

TIP: The overflow pipe will be the pipe that is at the lowest point of all the hoses and pipes, generally exiting through the wall to outside. Sometimes it will be connected to the waste pipework, so just follow the lowest pipe to where it terminates.

How do I know my leak is from the softener and not elsewhere?

Many times I get called out to a leak which is totally unrelated to the softener, so to avoid call out charges, this is what you should be looking for. As soon as you find a leak in the vicinity of the water softener, bypass your softener. If there is still a leak, the chances are it's non related.

Tip: The leak may continue for a while after the softener has been by-passed. This is because the water pressure is still high and is releasing slowly through the leak. This will eventually stop, if it is related to the water softener. If this is the case and the leak stops, give us a call on [01243 607494](tel:01243607494)

Tip: If you have a water meter, by-pass the water softener. If the meter is still going round, then you have a leak elsewhere unrelated to the water softener. If it is still going round, call your plumber.

Noises from your softener

The most common noise is the regeneration. This can often sound like a leak or water running. This noise will last up to about 20 minutes and longer for larger water softeners. If it continues for a long period, try a manual regeneration ([see Page 31](#)).

If it lasts for hours, please call the office [01243 607494](tel:01243607494)

If you have a reverse osmosis (RO) system, such as a K5, you will also have water running to drain for longer periods of time and this is normal.

Note: *In order to produce the RO water, there is a waste product during the manufacturing process and this is flushed out to the drain.*

Garden tap (outside)

How do I know if my garden tap is supplied by soft water?

The quickest way to check is to isolate your softener by turning the two blue levers ONLY. If water still flows from the tap and does not slow down, then it is hard fed and not going through the softener.

If your softener is supplying your outside tap, using it will cause the water softener to use more salt than is needed and, therefore, more expensive. So remember to by-pass your softener before using your outside tap.

On the flip side – soft water is great for washing your car/windows, so you may wish to keep it in service for that.

Salt creep

Salt creep is salt crystallisation within your water softener.

From time to time, you may find residue within the salt replacement section of your water softener, especially in hotter places such as airing cupboards.

Do not worry, you don't need to call us out. It is simply the result of salt crystallisation.

Here is a link to my website which shows you how to effectively clean your softener.

[More info on Salt Creep](#)

Dropped water pressure

Check by-pass is in the service position? [Page 2](#)

Is it the same at a hard feed tap or outlet?

A: YES. It is the same so not the water softener.

A: NO. By-pass the softener and if water flows normally call the office.

Is your neighbour experiencing the same thing?

A: YES. Most likely the water board are doing some repairs.

A: NO. You have done the above, then call the office.

Sediment build up:

Do you have a separate drinking system? If yes, go to [page 32](#)

Check the inlet and outlet pipe and see if there is a blockage. If you can't locate and clear it, please call us on [01243 607494](tel:01243607494)

The system is too small and can't cope with your needs. Then maybe your circumstances have changed and you may need an upgrade.

My water tastes salty

The drain hose may be clogged or kinked, so the brine might not be being flushed away during the regeneration cycles.

Check for a blockage or kinked pipe. If you are still not sure, give us a call on [01243 607494](tel:01243607494)

Try a manual regeneration, [see Page 27](#)

TIP: Put the softener into by-pass, run the water for 1 minute and sample the water again. If the taste has gone, give us a call. If it is still there, then it is unrelated to the water softener.

My water feels slimy

From time to time, I get asked if there is anyway to make the water less soft once the softener is installed. Yes, is the simple answer. However, here are some things to think about before you go down that route.

When washing in the shower or bath, use less soaps approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of what you would normally use. People often say that they can't get the soap off. The reality is that what you have been used to is soap scum and chalk residue being left on your skin when washing in hard water.

My water feels slimy (continued)

Now you are experiencing what people quite often call “slimy”. I prefer the word “silky”. Soft water will not create a soap scum nor will it contain any chalk, leaving your skin and pores clean and free from these nasties which are huge contributors to skin complaints, such as eczema and psoriasis.

If, after taking this into consideration, you still feel your water is too soft, then you can slightly open the middle grey valve on the by-pass to allow in the desired amount of hard water. It may take a while to get it right, but start off small before you go big!

My laundry doesn't feel like I thought it would...

Soft water is great for your laundry! Once you have soft water, you will only use 1/3 of the detergent that you would normally use. Less detergent means fewer chemicals, with the added bonus of saving money and the environment along the way.

Tips: Soft water will only maintain the fabrics vibrancy - it will not restore old or worn fabrics to their original state. Powder has more softening chemicals than liquid that you no longer require, so maybe switch to liquid. Use less than recommended and see if your laundry feels better.

You no longer need fabric softener – if you still want to use it make sure you reduce the amount by at least half.

My softener isn't regenerating...

Is the softener in by-pass? [See page 2](#)

Is the softener using salt?

A: YES. May mean you just have not heard it recently. Check water to see if it is soft. Pages 4 and 5

A: NO. Manually regenerate. [See page 31](#)

Still no joy? Call us on [01243 607494](tel:01243607494)

Softener is not using salt

Do you have hard water?

YES: Go to pages 2 - 4

NO: Continue

Put the softener into a manual regeneration.

[Kinetico Premier Compact](#)

[Kinetico Essential 8](#)

Ecowater Evolution: This is done by selecting the regeneration button on the faceplate.

If the water is still hard and not using salt, call us on **01243 607494**

Why is my water grainy?

Salt based softeners use resin beads to filter out the particles that give you hard water. These typically last as long as the softener. In some cases though, they can break or lose their potential, requiring you to add salt more often.

Another indicator is noticing floating particles in the softened water.

If you experience this, then please give us a call. Unfortunately this often means a replacement softener or overhaul is needed.

Blue or green staining

The stain is copper deposited from the corrosion of the water piping and fixtures.

This comes down to two things:

Poor quality copper has been used and the copper is leaking out and, or most likely, the earth bonding has been broken. This will need to be addressed by an electrician through a continuity test. It may be wise to get a whole house periodic test. You will get a certificate for the test and piece of mind about the rest of the electrics in the house. So it looks like your water softener is a fault finder too and could have saved your life!

Salt storage

Salt can be stored virtually anywhere, as long as the package is unopened and undamaged.

Store block salt packets on their side and stack one on top of the other.

TIP: If the salt blocks stick together, drop from about an inch above the ground on the widest area of the block to separate.

Manually regenerate

[Kinetico Premier Compact](#)

[Kinetico Essential 8](#)

[Ecowater ED](#)

Ecowater Evolution: This is done by selecting the regeneration button on the faceplate.

Remember, if you have run out of salt, you will need to regenerate approximately 8 hours later (this is to allow the salt to dissolve into a brine solution).

If the water is still hard and not using salt, call us on **01243 607494**

Filters and drinking systems

Although a filter has a natural 12 month expiration date once installed, your filter could work on a literage system. This means, depending on how much you use, your filter may expire sooner if you have reached maximum capacity. This is perfectly normal, particularly in busier households.

There are different ways to spot your filter needs replacing, depending on which system you have.

Some have a blue indicator that goes down as the filter is being used up.

You may experience loss of water pressure, or you may just simply notice a difference in the quality of the water you have become accustomed too, such as an unusual taste or odour.