

WATRS

Water Redress Scheme

ADJUDICATOR'S DECISION SUMMARY

Adjudication Reference: WAT/ /1174

Date of Decision: 18 February 2019

Complaint

The customer submits the company has billed him incorrectly and provided a poor level of service. He wants the company to replace his water meter, waive the outstanding bill and pay compensation in the sum of £2500.00.

Defence

The company denies it is at fault. It asserts it has billed the customer correctly and provided a good level of service.

Findings

The customer has not proven any failing by the company.

Outcome

The company does not need to take any further action.

The customer must reply by 18 March 2019 to accept or reject this decision.

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- It again offered to test the meter and check for a leak but the customer declined. It has asked the meter manufacturer for the details the customer wants but it has not received a response.

How is a WATRS decision reached?

In reaching my decision, I have considered two key issues. These are:

1. Whether the company failed to provide its services to the customer to the standard to be reasonably expected by the average person.
2. Whether or not the customer has suffered any financial loss or other disadvantage as a result of a failing by the company.

In order for the customer's claim against the company to succeed, the evidence available to the adjudicator must show on a balance of probabilities that the company has failed to provide its services to the standard one would reasonably expect and that as a result of this failure the customer has suffered some loss or detriment. If no such failure or loss is shown, the company will not be liable.

I have carefully considered all of the evidence provided. If I have not referred to a particular document or matter specifically, this does not mean that I have not considered it in reaching my decision.

How was this decision reached?

1. The customer submits his water meter is faulty and that the company billed him for a higher sum than it should have done as a result.
2. The company issued a bill on 29 August 2018 in the sum of £7302.20.
3. The company has provided water usage data that shows a high increase in water usage between March and August 2018, with usage then returning to normal. I consider this suggests usage increased during this period or; there was a leak that has been fixed or; the meter is faulty.
4. It is for the customer to prove the meter is faulty and that he has therefore been charged incorrectly. I would not usually expect the customer to be able to prove this. However, I note the company offered to arrange for the wholesaler to test the meter and check for a leak, yet the

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customer refused. The customer therefore had the opportunity to prove the meter was at fault but he declined.

5. In the absence of any evidence to show the meter was faulty, I cannot say the company applied incorrect charges. And so I find the customer's claims for the company to replace the water meter or waive the outstanding bill are unable to succeed.
6. The customer submits the company sent him two incorrect bills causing distress and, he was put to time and inconvenience in checking for a leak and taking meter readings.
7. I note the company issued a bill on 13 August 2018 in the sum of £64,820.05. The customer contacted the company to explain this was based on a previous incorrect reading and provided the current meter readings. The company then cancelled the bill and issued a correct bill on 29 August 2018.
8. The customer states it was the company's agent who provided the incorrect meter reading. However, I have not been provided with any evidence to support this assertion. I am also mindful that the billing error was quickly rectified. I acknowledge it would have been a shock to receive this bill however, I find no failing proven by the company in this regard.
9. As explained above, I find no evidence the second bill, issued on 29 August 2018 was incorrect.
10. Having reviewed the records of contact between the parties I note the company assisted the customer and responded to the complaint in a timely manner.
11. I appreciate it was inconvenient for the customer to check for a leak and take meter readings; however, I find the company acted reasonably by offering to test the meter and check for a leak.
12. I note the customer asked for data about the water meter, including its service history and calibration records. The company provided the information it had and told the customer it had asked the meter manufacturer for further information. I consider the company acted reasonably in doing so.

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13. The company says it has not yet had a response from the meter manufacturer. I appreciate the customer will be disappointed by this; however, the company is not responsible for the actions of third parties.

14. I find the company has provided a good level of service overall and that it has not caused the customer unnecessary distress or inconvenience. I therefore do not find it failed to provide its services to the standard to be reasonably expected and so, the customer's claim for compensation is unable to succeed.

Outcome

The company does not need to take any further action.

What happens next?

- This adjudication decision is final and cannot be appealed or amended.
- The customer must reply by 18 March 2019 to accept or reject this decision.
- When you tell WATRS that you accept or reject the decision, the company will be notified of this. The case will then be closed.
- If you do not tell WATRS that you accept or reject the decision, this will be taken to be a rejection of the decision.



Justine Mensa-Bonsu, LLB (Hons), PGDL (BVC)

Adjudicator

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