

WATRS

Water Redress Scheme

ADJUDICATOR'S DECISION SUMMARY

Adjudication Reference: WAT 1878

Date of Decision: 24 March 2020

Complaint

The customer states the company failed to identify the reason for his higher than expected water bills was high water pressure. He submits he paid more for his water over the last nine years as a result. He claims for the company to waive his outstanding bill.

Defence

The company states it has charged the customer correctly based on his usage. It denies the claim.

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 21 April 2020 to accept or reject this decision.

This document is private and confidential. It must not be disclosed to any person or organisation not directly involved in the adjudication unless this is necessary in order to enforce the decision.

ADJUDICATOR'S DECISION

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Date of Decision: 24 March 2020

Party Details

Customer: []

Company: [].

Case Outline

The customer's complaint is that:

- He has had high water bills for the past nine years. However, despite complaints, the company did not identify any reason for this.
- He decided to reduce the water pressure to his property and in doing so found his bills reduced by about £7.50 per month.
- He believes his bills were high due to high water pressure, rather than usage. If the company had told him this earlier his bills would have been lower.
- He claims for the company to waive the outstanding bill on his account.
- In his comments on the company's defence, the customer states his bills have decreased since he took action to lower the water pressure. This proves the high bills were due to high water pressure.

The company's response is that:

- It has charged the customer based on his usage as recorded by a water meter and in line with its Charges Scheme.
- The customer has complained of high usage but it has found no evidence of a leak or other issue.
- There is a set minimum level of water pressure it must provide but no maximum level.
- It denies the claim

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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 bills were around £65.00 per month but he would have expected them to be around £40.00 per month based on the number of people in his household.
2. The customer asserts his bills were high due to high water pressure; that the company should have identified this earlier and had it done so his bills would be lower.
3. It is not in dispute the customer had high water pressure however, I note the company does not have to limit the water pressure to a customer's property. I therefore cannot say the company failed to provide its services to the standard reasonably expected in this regard.
4. It is also not in dispute that the company has charged the customer based on the water he has used as recorded by his water meter. I therefore cannot say the company charged the customer incorrectly.

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5. I consider it is not possible to say with certainty the customer would have used less water if his water pressure was lower. While I acknowledge the customer's submission that his bills are now lower, this could be equally be due to a change in usage.
6. As it is not possible to say high water pressure was the reason for the customer's high bills, I would not expect the company to have identified this is as the reason for such. Therefore, I cannot say the company failed to provide its services to the standard reasonably expected in this regard.
7. I appreciate the customer will be disappointed with this outcome. However, adjudication is an evidence based process and I find the customer has not proven the company directly or indirectly caused him to use more water. As I have not found any failing by the company, the customer's claim 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 21 April 2020 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)

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Adjudicator

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