

WATRS

Water Redress Scheme

ADJUDICATOR'S DECISION SUMMARY

Adjudication Reference: WAT/ /1441

Date of Decision: 16 September 2019

Complaint

The customer submits the company failed to tell him he could save money with a water meter when they discussed metering in 2014. As a result he did not apply for a meter until recently. He claims for the company to recalculate his bills from 2014 based on his current metered charges.

Defence

The company denies the claim. It submits it discussed metering with the customer in 2014 and told the customer to apply online. The customer did not apply for a meter until recently. There is no basis for it to amend his previous bills.

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 XX October 2019 to accept or reject this decision.

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Date of Decision: 16 September 2019

Party Details

Customer: []

Company: []

Case Outline

The customer's complaint is that:

- In 2014 he discussed installing a water meter with the company by phone. However, it did not tell him that he would save money by installing a meter. As a result, he did not apply for a meter at that time.
- He has since installed a water meter and his charges have reduced.
- He claims for the company to recalculate his charges from 2014, based on his current metered charges.

The company's response is that:

- In 2014 it discussed metering with the customer and he said he would make an online application.
- It did not receive an application from the customer until recently.
- It is not obliged to charge the customer on a metered basis until his meter was installed.

How is a WATRS decision reached?

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

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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 asserts the company failed to inform him that he could save money with a water meter.
2. I consider it reasonable to expect the company to provide its customers with information about how they can lower their bills.
3. Within the CCWater documents provided the company submits it provides information of the potential benefits of metering on customer's annual bills and on its website. It submits it cannot provide specific information as the charges depend on how many people live in a property and how much water they use.
4. Within the CCWater documents the customer acknowledges he saw information on his bills which stated a meter may reduce his charges. He submits he also found a water usage calculator online but he found that difficult to use.
5. Metered charges depend on the amount of water a household uses. Therefore, a person's bill could be higher or lower once they have a water meter installed. It follows that the company

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cannot tell customers they will definitely save money with a water meter or tell customers how much their bills will be once a meter is installed.

6. In light of the above, I am satisfied the company provided its services to the standard to be reasonably expected by providing information about water metering on bills and online. The company did not have to take any further action and it was up to the customer whether to apply for a water meter or not. Once the customer applied for a water meter the company correctly charged him based on his metered usage.
7. The customer has not proven any failing on the part of the company and therefore his claim for the company to recalculate his bills from 2014 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 XX October 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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