

WATRS

Water Redress Scheme

ADJUDICATOR'S FINAL DECISION SUMMARY

Adjudication Reference: WAT-X357

Date of Decision: 11/05/2021

Party Details

Customer: The Customer

Company: X Company

Complaint

The customer moved into his property in August 2019 but the company has failed to invoice him for water services. After the customer referred his complaint to CCW, the company said it had set up an account in his name and he would receive an invoice, and it also said that the customer's account would be credited with £200.00 to compensate him for the delay; however, the company has failed to do this. The customer wants the company to send him a bill, provide an apology and pay him compensation.

Response

The company has not responded to the claim.

Findings

I find that the company has failed to provide its service to the standard reasonably expected by the average customer. Therefore, unless the company can show that it has already done so, I direct the company to provide the customer with an invoice as a matter of urgency, offer the customer an interest free payment plan, and pay the customer £200.00 in compensation, as previously promised. I also direct the company to provide the customer with an apology for the length of time this issue has taken to resolve and for the stress caused to the customer and his partner.

Outcome

Unless the company can show that it has already done so, I direct the company to provide the customer with an invoice, offer the customer an interest free payment plan, and pay the customer £200.00 in compensation, as previously promised. I also direct the company to provide the customer with a formal written apology.

The customer must reply by 09/06/2021 to accept or reject this decision.

ADJUDICATOR'S FINAL DECISION SUMMARY

Adjudication Reference: WAT-X357

Date of Decision: 11/05/2021

Case Outline

The customer's complaint is that:

• Since moving into his property in August 2019, he has been asking the company to set up an account in his name, but the company has been unable to do so. • After he raised this matter with CCW, the company said his account had been set up, and he would receive a welcome pack and £200.00 in compensation. • However, the company failed to keep its word and, after CCW followed the issue up with the company again, it sent an email asking him to set up a new account. He referred the company back to previous communications saying the account had already been set up, but the company has now stopped responding. • He does not want to waste any more time on this issue and intends to invoice the company for the time he has spent trying to resolve it. • Paying his bill should not be this difficult and it is causing him and his partner anxiety. He is worried that the company will send a large bill when this is finally resolved and, although he has been putting money aside to cover what is owed, the company has been unable to tell him how much the monthly payments will be or how much water has been used. He is also worried that his credit rating will be negatively impacted. The situation is made worse by the fact that he is unable to change his water provider. • He wants the company to start invoicing him and provide an apology for the time this issue has taken to resolve, and for the anxiety he and his partner have suffered. • He would also like compensation but has not stated the amount claimed.

The company's response is that:

The company has not responded to the customer's claim.

How is a WATRS decision reached?

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

- Whether the company failed to provide its services to the customer to the standard to be reasonably expected by the average person.
- 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. Having reviewed the evidence, I accept that the customer moved into the property in August 2019 and requested an invoice from the company on various occasions but, due to a system issue, the company was unable to set up the customer's account and produce an invoice. On 22 October 2020, after the customer had referred his complaint to CCW, the company stated that it had set up an account in the customer's name, would issue an invoice, offer a payment plan, and credit the customer's account with £200.00 to compensate him for the delay. However, at the time of the customer's application in March 2021, the customer had not received an invoice or the compensation promised, and the company has not responded to this claim.
2. In view of the above, I find that the company has failed to provide its service to the standard reasonably expected by the average customer. Therefore, unless the company can show that it has already done so, I direct the company to provide the customer with an invoice as a matter of urgency, offer the customer an interest free payment plan, and pay the customer £200.00 in compensation as previously promised, which I find to be a reasonable amount in the circumstances. I also direct the company to provide the customer with a formal written apology for the length of time this issue has taken to resolve, and for the stress caused to the customer and his partner.
3. I have considered the customer's comments on the preliminary decision and reassure him that if he accepts the decision, the company must comply.

Outcome

1. Unless the company can show that it has already done so, I direct the company to provide the customer with an invoice, offer the customer an interest free payment plan, and pay the customer £200.00 in compensation, as previously promised. I also direct the company to provide the customer with a formal written apology.

What happens next?

This adjudication decision is final and cannot be appealed or amended.

The customer must reply within 20 working days to accept or reject this final 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.

- If you choose to accept this decision, the company will have to do what I have directed within 20 working days of the date in which WATRS notifies the company that you have accepted my decision. If the company does not do what I have directed within this time limit, you should let WATRS know.
- If you choose to reject this decision, WATRS will close the case and the company will not have to do what I have directed.
- If you do not tell WATRS that you accept or reject the decision, this will be taken to be a rejection of the decision. WATRS will therefore close the case and the company will not have to do what I have directed.

Kate Wilks
Adjudicator