

# WATRS

## Water Redress Scheme

### ADJUDICATOR'S FINAL DECISION SUMMARY

Adjudication Reference: WAT-X505

Date of Decision: 10/08/2021

#### Party Details

Customer:

Company:

#### Complaint

The customer complains that the company failed to properly investigate and resolve low water pressure affecting her home in 2003/4 until she complained again in 2020. Even then the company was dismissive and she had to push it to take action. She seeks compensation in the sum of £3750.00 due to suffering low water pressure for 16 years.

#### Response

The company explains it has no record of events from 2003/4 and so cannot comment on the customer's account of what happened then. Upon the customer's complaint of low water pressure in 2020, it found no issue with her water pressure but found a poor water flow and carried out repair works. It paid the customer £50.00 by way of an apology for the poor service she experienced and offered a further £50.00. It denies the claim.

#### Findings

The evidence does not show that the company failed to provide its services to the standard to be reasonably expected.

#### Outcome

The company does not need to take any further action.

The customer must reply by 08/09/2021 to accept or reject this decision.

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## Case Outline

### **The customer's complaint is that:**

In 2003 and 2004 she contacted the company as she was experiencing low water pressure. However, the company found no issues with its assets and suggested the low pressure was due to the size of her house. She later installed a water tank and an electric shower to alleviate the impact. In March 2020 she reported low pressure to the company again. The company sent out an engineer who was initially very dismissive. Only after further pressure did the company carry out further investigations. It found there was a poor water flow due to damaged pipework and a damaged external stopcock and that these were long standing issues. Since the company carried out repair works her water pressure has drastically improved. The company has offered £100.00 in total as a goodwill gesture but refused a further sum as it no longer has records from 2004. She wants £3750.00 in compensation due to experiencing poor water pressure for over 16 years. In comments on the company's response the customer maintains her claim. She explains the only reason she made no further reports of low water pressure was because she relied on the company's advice in 2003/4. Only after she received further advice from a builder in 2020 did she realise that she should complain again.

### **The company's response is that:**

It does not hold records back to 2003/4 and so cannot comment upon or confirm the customer's statement as to what happened then. The customer reported poor water pressure in March 2020. It visited and found the water pressure was fine. However it found the volume of water flowing at the boundary was poor. It rectified this and the customer reported she was happy with the water pressure and the work carried out. The customer then raised concerns with the attitude of the engineer during the initial visit and also its investigation into issues she reported in 2004. It offered £50.00 as a gesture by way of an apology for the poor experience she had with its engineer. However, it explained that it had no records from 2004 and so had no information about - and could not offer compensation for - any poor water pressure from that time. It cannot say when the customer first started experiencing poor water pressure. It has no record that its engineers told the customer there was longstanding damage to any pipework. It has paid the customer £50.00 and offered a further £50.00 which she has rejected.

## 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. I have reviewed the customer's application and the CCWater documents provided alongside.
2. I note the customer says she first reported low water pressure to the company in 2003/4. When the company found no issue with its own assets she took her own actions and did not make a further complaint of poor water pressure to the company until 2020.
3. The company has no records dating back to 2003/4 and it is not legally required to keep records for that length of time.
4. The customer says the company failed to properly investigate and resolve the issue in 2003/4. However, there is a lack of substantive evidence that shows the customer complained to the company at that time, what action it then took or any evidence the customer has experienced low water pressure since then.
5. I have considered the customer's submissions, but these alone are not sufficient for me to accept she has proven her account on the balance of probabilities. I am therefore unable to find the company has failed to properly investigate any earlier report of low water pressure.
6. It is not in dispute the customer reported low water pressure in March 2020, the company carried out repairs, and then the customer reported her water pressure had improved. While I recognise the company has distinguished between poor

water flow and poor water pressure, I am inclined to find on balance that the repair works also improved the customer's water pressure.

7. However, I have not seen any substantive evidence that the damage repaired was longstanding or that it was responsible for any long term water pressure issues. The customer has said the engineers told her this but I have no other supporting record or evidence. I am therefore unable to find the customer's account proven on balance.

8. In light of the above, I cannot say the company failed to provide its services to the standard to be reasonably expected over the years. Rather, the evidence provided shows that once the customer reported an issue the company acted to rectify it.

9. The customer also complains that the company's engineer was dismissive on their initial visit and she had to push for them to investigate further. The company previously apologised for this and paid her £50.00 for the poor service. I consider it acted reasonably in doing so. Given the company provided a suitable remedy at an early stage, I do not consider this amounts to a failure to provide its services to the standard to be reasonably expected.

10. I appreciate the customer will be disappointed with my findings. However, I must make a decision based on the evidence and there is a lack of evidence to support her claim.

11. I note I did not receive any comments on my preliminary decision.

## **Outcome**

1. 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 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.

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**Justine Mensa-Bonsu**  
**Adjudicator**