

WATRS

Water Redress Scheme

ADJUDICATOR'S FINAL DECISION SUMMARY

Adjudication Reference: WAT/X242

Date of Final Decision: 13 December 2022

Party Details

Customer:

Company:

Complaint

The customer disputes she should have to pay her water bill in full as it is much higher than expected. She believes her water meter is faulty. She seeks that the company amend her bill.

Response

The company says it has checked the customer's meter and it is recording usage accurately. The customer's bills are correct and due. It denies the claim.

Findings

The evidence shows the company has provided its services to the standard to be reasonably expected.

Outcome

The company does not need to take any action.

The customer must reply by 13 January 2023 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.

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Case Outline

The customer's complaint is that:

- She received a bill that was much higher than usual and she believes the water meter is faulty.
- She has not paid the bill as she disputes it but the company has placed negative entries on her credit file.
- She would like the company to amend her bill.
- In comments on the company's response she says the company's documents show her bills have risen from £255.00 to £600.00 without explanation.
- The customer made no comments on a preliminary decision.

The company's response is that:

- The customer contacted it in January 2022 as she was unhappy with her bills which had been increasing.
- Its engineer visited the customer's property and checked her water meter. They found no sign of a leak and no fault with the meter.
- It confirmed to the customer its charges were correct and due.
- It removed late payment information from the customer's credit file for the period that she disputed the bills.
- On receipt of the CCWater complaint it again sent an engineer to double check the customer's meter. They again found no faults with the meter and no sign of a leak.
- It offered to further test the customer's meter at her own cost; however, if it was found to be faulty it would waive this fee. However, the customer did not accept its offer.

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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 company has provided copies of the customer's bills since January 2020, meter readings since then and calculations to show her average daily water usage. These documents show the customer's recorded usage has increased. It follows that her bills have also increased.
2. The company is entitled to charge the customer based on the usage recorded at her water meter. And it is entitled to report the customer's payment history to credit reference agencies.
3. I acknowledge the customer denies using more water and believes her water meter must be faulty. However, the company has provided records from its engineer visits showing no faults were found with the meter and that there were no signs of a leak at the customer's property.

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4. The evidence provided shows that the company has acted reasonably in charging the customer based on meter readings, after ruling out any fault with her meter. Therefore, the evidence shows the company has provided its services to the standard to be reasonably expected.
5. I am mindful the company has offered to remove the water meter for further testing should the customer wish. There is a charge for this service; however, if the customer is sure the meter will be found at fault, she can be reassured the cost will be refunded to her. This seems like a sensible way forward.
6. I appreciate the customer may be disappointed with this outcome. However, the company does not have to identify why the customer's usage has increased. It only has to rule out a fault on its own assets. It is possible there is a leak on the customer's private pipework; however, she would need to engage her own plumber to investigate this.

Outcome

The company does not need to take any action.

What happens next?

- This adjudication decision is final and cannot be appealed or amended.
- The customer must reply by 13 January 2023 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.



J Mensa-Bonsu LLB (Hons) PgDL (BVC)
Adjudicator

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