

# WATRS

## Water Redress Scheme

### ADJUDICATOR'S FINAL DECISION SUMMARY

Adjudication Reference: WAT/X538

Date of Final Decision: 4 June 2023

#### Party Details

Customer: XX

Company: XX

#### Complaint

The customer considers the company's bills are incorrect. They seek that the company amend their bills so that they only pay for water used.

#### Response

It charged the customer based on Automatic Meter Readings then found this device was faulty. It has since reconciled the customer's account and billed correctly based on actual meter reads. It denies the claim.

#### Findings

The evidence shows the company has billed the customer based on actual meter reads. In doing so it 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 3 August 2023 to accept or reject this decision.

# ADJUDICATOR'S FINAL DECISION

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## Case Outline

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

- The company billed the business based on Automatic Meter Readings. However it recently said these were incorrect. It then billed on actual meter readings resulting in much higher bills.
- The customer considers these latest charges are incorrect.
- The customer seeks that the company amend their bill.
- The customer made no comment on the company's response.
- In comments on a preliminary decision the customer said the dispute arose due to a failure in the company's equipment. This put them to time and cost which the company should compensate. The company has since billed them for works to the meter but they did not agree to bear the costs of maintaining the equipment. The customer maintains the charges are incorrect.

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

- The water meter serving the customer's property had an Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) device attached to it, however, this became faulty between October 2018 and October 2019.
- As the AMR was not providing the correct read information, there was a period of two years where it appeared that there was no water consumption and the reads were static. This meant that the customer was only being billed fixed charges from October 2019 to October 2021.
- In October 2021 it inspected the AMR device, found it was faulty and removed it.
- It then billed based on the actual meter read. This resulted in a higher bill than usual.
- It accepts it should have checked the meter sooner when it received more than one static read.
- It credited the customer's account with a goodwill payment of £255.45 to take account of this. This is in addition to the previous credits of £50 and £90 which were for Guaranteed Service Standard failures and differences in tariff prices due to the catch-up read. This has reduced the customer's account balance to £199.59.

## 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. It is not in dispute the AMR device did not record the customer's water usage correctly. This meant the company did not bill the customer correctly from 2019 to 2021. The company accepts it should have identified the issue sooner. I find this evidences that the company failed to provide its services to the standards to be reasonably expected.
2. The company is entitled to charge the customer based on actual meter readings in line with its scheme of charges. Upon finding the AMR device faulty the company billed the customer based on actual meter readings. I consider it acted properly in doing do. There is no substantive evidence to suggest the customer's actual meter readings are incorrect and therefore there is no reason to adjust those charges. The evidence does not show the company failed to provide its services to the standards to be reasonably expected in this regard.
3. I acknowledge the customer doubts the actual meter readings as these show a period of unusually high consumption. However, on review of the CCWater documents, it is clear the customer ruled out any leak and usage has since returned to normal. I consider this evidences the water meter is recording correctly.

4. I acknowledge the customer's bills were higher once based on actual meter readings. And the first bill which reconciled the account was higher still. I consider the company acted reasonably in applying a credit to the customer's account by way of a goodwill gesture, in recognition of this.
5. As to the customer's claim for the company to amend its bills. There is a lack of evidence the customer's bills are incorrect and therefore a reduction in charges is not justified or warranted. Consequently the customer's claim is unable to succeed.
6. In accordance with WATRS rule 5.4.3 I must disregard any new matters raised in the customer's comments on a preliminary decision. I acknowledge the customer maintains that current bills are incorrect however there is no substantive evidence in support that would lead me to change my decision. Consequently my decision remains the same.

#### **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 3 August 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**