

SPSO decision report

Case: 201103715, Business Stream Ltd
Sector: water
Subject: charging method / calculation
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

An employee of Scottish Water visited Mr C's business premises and advised that he was going to install a water meter. As he had received no prior warning, Mr C at first refused permission for this. However, following discussions with Business Stream, during which he was told that the cost to him would be minimal, Mr C agreed to the meter installation. He was unhappy to then receive a water bill a year later, which he considered excessive as he used no water at his business premises. Mr C complained that it was inappropriate for the water meter to be installed and that he was given insufficient information about the charges he would incur. He said that, had he known about the charges, he would have had the water supply disconnected, as his business does not use water.

We found that Mr C's business had been identified as a gap site (a site that has been receiving water-related services without being charged). It was appropriate for a meter to be installed in line with the Scottish Government's Full Business Metering scheme. However, we were concerned by the lack of information given to Mr C about the metering process. Mr C had asked Business Stream about their charges and they had been unable to provide him with any information. We found this to be unreasonable as, although they could not predict how much water Mr C would use, they should have been able to tell him about their fixed charges.

Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream Ltd:

- apologise to Mr C for the issues highlighted in our decision letter; and
- credit Mr C's account with an amount equivalent to 50 percent of the total of his first water bill.