

SPSO decision report

Case: 201104403, Business Stream Ltd
Sector: scottish government and devolved administration
Subject: incorrect billing
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C, a business owner, complained that Business Stream inappropriately charged him for the water services to a neighbouring domestic property. The water supply for both properties went through Mr C's meter. During our investigation, we found that where there is a metered supply that includes a domestic property, the domestic property should not pay for water services in their council tax. Business Stream instead charge their business customer, in this case Mr C, for the metered usage. Mr C's neighbours in the domestic property should, therefore, have paid him for their consumption in a private arrangement. Business Stream's relevant policy states that they cannot become involved in any disputes about this.

That said, we made two recommendations to Business Stream, as we had concerns about the way they handled Mr C's complaints. We considered that Business Stream failed to take ownership of the complaints and failed to provide adequate advice about how Mr C could pursue the matter with his neighbour. They also incorrectly stated in a letter that Mr C was due a reimbursement from them.

Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream Ltd:

- issue a written apology to Mr C for failing to provide adequate advice about how he could pursue the matter in their responses to an MSP; and incorrectly stating in a letter that he was due a reimbursement from them; and
- provide Mr C with further advice on recouping water charges from the neighbouring domestic property.