

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201105262, Business Stream Ltd  
**Sector:** scottish government and devolved administration  
**Subject:** incorrect billing  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C occupied business premises in April 2004. She complained that in 2011 she received a telephone call from Business Stream telling her that she would be receiving a bill from them for water charges for the year March 2010 - 11. She complained that this was unreasonable as it was the first time Business Stream had ever contacted her.

Our investigation found that although Business Stream are the default provider as part of the water industry's regulatory regime, they were under no obligation to identify, or to identify quickly, premises where there was no licensed provider. However, in Ms C's case it had been identified in March 2010 that Business Stream would act in default as her provider, but she was not told about this until a year later. We took the view that this was too long and upheld the complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream Ltd:

- apologise to Ms C for their initial failure to respond properly to her query about water services until June 2011
- waive the first of the penalty charges (plus VAT) that was levied on Ms C's account in May 2011