

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201200656, Business Stream Ltd  
**Sector:** Scottish Government and devolved administration  
**Subject:** charging method / calculation  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C, who is a business adviser, complained on behalf of his client, a customer of Business Stream. He alleged that Business Stream were incorrectly charging for water and waste water services based on the wrong effective start date, despite his client drawing this error to Business Stream's attention. Mr C further alleged that his client had been put under unreasonable stress as a consequence, and that Business Stream had not readily agreed to suspend action to recover the money they claimed was due. He maintained that his client had also been prevented from changing suppliers because of Business Stream's mistakes.

We investigated the complaint, taking all the relevant documentation into account including Business Stream's complaint file, the relevant bills, internal emails etc. We also made formal enquiries of Business Stream.

We did not, however, uphold the complaints. Mr C believed that the premises concerned were a 'gap' site (ie that the site had a live water and waste water connection but neither Scottish Water or Business Stream knew that the property existed). Our investigation established that this was not the case and, rather, the premises were determined to be 'vacant' (ie Scottish Water and Business Stream were aware that the property existed and had a water connection, but believed the premises to be vacant). There were different billing arrangements in place for each of these categories when the water industry market opened for competition. Mr C had mistakenly assumed that his client occupied a gap site rather than a vacant site, and our investigation found that the way in which his client was billed was in fact correct.

Our investigation also revealed that Mr C's client's account was suspended during Business Stream's investigation and that there was no evidence of his client being harassed or bullied. Furthermore, as it was confirmed that the company had been properly charged for its water services, we did not find that they had been unreasonably prevented from changing supplier. Business Stream had in fact provided information about this to Mr C's client, had they wished to progress the matter.