

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201200690, Business Stream  
**Sector:** water  
**Subject:** charging method / calculation  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C had worked from home on a part-time basis for a number of years, using a room in his house as a surgery. He complained that Business Stream had written to him saying that an audit had shown that he was occupying a property thought to be vacant and, to continue to receive water and waste services there, he needed to set up an account. As the default provider, they billed Mr C for usage. Mr C complained to us that Business Stream was unreasonably charging him for services to his property, even though they did not provide this. He also said that Business Stream were acting against advice on a government website which said that if a person works from home, any water used would be included in the domestic bill.

Our investigation found that Business Stream had explained to Mr C that they had received information from Scottish Water and the Scottish Assessors' Association that there had been no charge for services since he entered the property, and that the surgery was commercially rated. Acting in line with their dual use property policy and duty under the legislation, and in the absence of any other service provider, they had asked for payment for provision of services. As it was clear that Business Stream was acting in line with their policy, and we could only question this if it had not been applied properly, we found that they acted reasonably in charging for these services. Although we appreciated that Mr C had seen differing website advice about how the water usage would be charged, we did not find that Business Stream could be held responsible for information on another website. They had, however, said that they would take action to ask for this to be corrected, which we found appropriate.