

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201202316, Business Stream  
**Sector:** water  
**Subject:** charging method / calculation  
**Outcome:** some upheld, action taken by body to remedy, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C operated a small business from an office converted from two small cottages. There were two separate supplies of water to the office, with two separate water meters. Initially Mr C was only billed for one meter but when Business Stream realised there were two, he received a bill with standing charges for both. Mr C queried this and Business Stream told him if he could alter the building's internal pipework they would remove a meter. Mr C did so, but was unhappy that Business Stream still insisted he pay two standing charges for the period when he had two meters. Mr C was also unhappy that he was sent a bill about a byelaws charge.

We did not uphold his first complaint. We found that Business Stream normally bill customers for standing charges for each meter, which is in line with the wholesale charges they in turn pay. Business Stream had no way of knowing whether Mr C could easily switch to only one as they had no information about the internal pipework of the building. They did, however, explain that he might be able to switch when this became clear to them. We noted that Business Stream had missed an opportunity to discuss this two months earlier, when they were in touch with Mr C about his bills and did not ask about the pipework. We found, however, that there was no requirement on them to suggest this, and that it was not obvious from the conversation that this would be helpful to him.

We did uphold Mr C's complaint about the bill for a byelaws charge, as we found he should not have received this. However, as Business Stream had apologised and cancelled this as soon as they were told about the error, there was no need for us to make any recommendation.