

SPSO decision report

Case: 201203092, Business Stream
Sector: water
Subject: incorrect billing
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C received an unusually high water bill. She checked the pipework for leaks and confirmed there had been no changes to her business practice to explain the increased use of water. Business Stream said that as the bill had returned to normal, it could not have been a problem with the meter. They also checked the meter as Ms C was having trouble gaining access to the meter.

Ms C was unhappy that she still had not been told how to access the meter and that Business Stream could not explain why the usage had gone up for a short period. Our investigation found that Business Stream had undertaken most of the checks they should have done to reassure themselves the problem was not on the public network. However, they had not confirmed with Scottish Water whether there was any work being carried out on the network at the time. We found that they should have done so, and we upheld this complaint, as well as that about access, as we also found that they should have done more to help Ms C access the meter. However, we did not uphold her complaint that they should have explained why the increase had occurred, as there were matters outwith their control on the private side of the supply, about which they had no knowledge. Business Stream was only required to explain why they were satisfied that the additional usage was not caused by problems on the public side of the meter.

Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- confirm with Scottish Water whether there were any issues with the network during the relevant period that could have caused the meter to register increased usage prior to pursuing the bill; and
- arrange a visit by their meter reader to ensure that Ms C can access the correct meter.