

SPSO decision report

Case: 201205211, Business Stream
Sector: water
Subject: incorrect billing
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C was unhappy as he thought that Scottish Water had wrongly installed a water meter at his business in 2003. When he became aware of this, in 2012, he contacted Business Stream. They said that the meter was believed to have been installed correctly, and that Scottish Water would neither remove nor resite it. Mr C complained to us about this, as he believed that he had been unfairly paying for water used by the flats above his property for ten years and that he was entitled to a refund.

Our investigation found that Business Stream had wrongly categorised Mr C's property as dual use, which suggested that there was a connection between his commercial property and the residential properties. We found that the residential properties had been paying for water through their council tax, and that the properties were not connected. Business Stream had told Mr C that he should contact the owners of the residential properties, and ask them to request a refund of their council tax, to then pass on to Mr C to pay for the water bill. We took the view that this was unfair - Mr C's property had been wrongly categorised, he had paid for water he had not used and Business Stream and Scottish Water had not done enough to try and resolve the situation.

Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- apologise to Mr C for the failings identified in our investigation;
- consider backdating the revised billing arrangements for Mr C's business to 2003; and
- re-install Mr C's water meter so that it only records water consumption for his business.