

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201205278, Business Stream  
**Sector:** water  
**Subject:** policy/administration  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

After Ms C's business moved into new premises in September 2009, Business Stream wrote asking her to confirm that the premises were occupied and to set up a water account. Ms C said that she completed and returned the forms, but heard nothing more. Business Stream said they did not receive the documents, and so it was not until an inspector visited her premises in December 2012 that an account was set up for her business and her first invoice issued. Ms C complained that the delay to her first invoice being issued was unreasonable. She also complained that it was not until it was issued that she realised her water consumption was unexpectedly high. Subsequent investigation found two leaks. She complained that Business Stream should have done more to help her identify and repair the leaks.

We found that it was Ms C's responsibility to tell Business Stream (or another provider) that she had moved into the premises. That said, we accepted that she had tried to do so when she received Business Stream's forms. We found that Business Stream had experienced problems with forms going missing around that time. Ultimately, we considered that this contributed around 12 months to the delay in the first invoice being issued. We did not consider it Business Stream's responsibility to identify or repair internal leaking pipes. However, we felt that they should recognise that Ms C incurred additional expense as a result of her first invoice being delayed, as it was not until she received it that she realised there was a problem with her water supply.

### Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- offer Ms C an ex-gratia payment equivalent to ten percent of her water bills for the period in question, in recognition of the delay to her initial bill and its impact on her ability to identify problems with her pipework.