

SPSO decision report

Case: 201300574, Business Stream
Sector: water
Subject: policy/administration
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C leased and operated a pub that shared its water supply with a residential property. He complained that Business Stream unreasonably delayed in issuing their initial invoice – he had run the pub since 2007 and only received an invoice in 2010 – and that when it arrived it was unreasonably high. Mr C felt that this was at least partly attributable to the meter serving more than one property.

Although Mr C maintained that he had notified Scottish Water of his occupancy of the premises concerned in 2007, our investigation did not find evidence to confirm this and noted that as soon as Business Stream knew of his occupancy in 2010, they began issuing bills. However, the bills were for both business and domestic premises. We did find that took too long for Business Stream to provide an appropriate meter in Mr C's premises. Because of this, the bills issued were incorrectly based and Mr C had paid twice for his domestic use (through both the metered charges and his council tax).

Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- make a formal apology for their role in the delay in providing an appropriate meter; and
- in the event of Mr C providing information to allow Scottish Water to refund overpaid charges, agree to refund him any difference in the cost.