

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201301487, Business Stream  
**Sector:** water  
**Subject:** charging method / calculation  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained about a delay in Business Stream issuing his first invoice. He was also unhappy that water charges were based on his property's rateable value, as he did not have a water meter.

Our investigation found that Mr C's property had been a 'gap site' (a site that has never been billed for water). As a result, Scottish Water (Business Stream's wholesaler) had told Business Stream in August 2010 that the property was receiving water without being charged. Mr C had moved into the property in March 2011, but Business Stream did not invoice him until after they visited the site in January 2013. Although Mr C may not have known that Business Stream were the default water provider, that did not automatically mean that their charges were invalid and so, in deciding his complaint, we considered the responsibilities of both parties. We found no evidence to indicate that Business Stream took any significant steps with regard to the property before the site visit. We considered that, when viewed as a whole, Business Stream took an unreasonable length of time to issue the first invoice and we upheld Mr C's first complaint.

Business Stream explained that their charges were originally based on his property's rateable value, but said that after Mr C submitted a reassessment application, a meter had been installed and his charges were now based on that. We found no evidence that Business Stream calculated the charges inappropriately before the meter was installed. However, there was some confusion about the reassessment process which may – at least in part - have contributed to a slight delay in the meter being installed. Although we did not uphold this complaint we made a recommendation.

### Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- consider whether an adjustment to the unmetered balance would be appropriate, in light of the confusion over the reassessment process.