

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201302073, Business Stream  
**Sector:** water  
**Subject:** charging method / calculation  
**Outcome:** resolved, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C owns a business that operates from premises that were formerly used a launderette. He said that he would have preferred a smaller meter, to reflect that his business would use less water than the previous one, but had been told that it would not be replaced. Mr C then complained to Business Stream when charges doubled because of an inexplicable spike in consumption. He complained to us because Business Stream would not accept that this was due to a fault in the meter, rather than to a problem on his premises which he had engaged a plumber to fix. They had also declined his request to replace the meter without charge.

Our investigation found that Business Stream had replaced the meter seven years before, and that it was the smallest meter that could be installed. Business Stream had sent out a field officer to investigate, and had advised Mr C to have the problem fixed, but they had no record that he had contacted them to confirm the work had been carried out and to ask for a leak allowance. We noted that they had given him advice about applying for a leak allowance, but we found that this advice could have been clearer, or Mr C could have been signposted to Business Stream's website. We asked Business Stream to ensure that this was done.

During the investigation, Mr C said that consumption had returned to normal, which suggested that there was no need to renew the meter. However, there remained a period when he was being charged for more than his business would normally use. After we contacted Business Stream, they reviewed the case and offered as a goodwill gesture to reduce the charge for the period when the spike was shown, to reflect normal usage. As Mr C was content with this, the complaint was resolved.