

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 201803537, Clear Business Water  
**Sector:** water  
**Subject:** incorrect billing  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C complained that she had been unreasonably billed for water she had not used. Ms C said that she had received an unexpectedly high bill, and that she had been charged for a visit by Scottish Water to verify if the water usage was due to a faulty water meter. Ms C said Clear Business Water (CBW) had failed to read her meter for a year and that they had not told her she would be charged for the visit by Scottish Water. Ms C said she accepted there had been a leak on her pipework, but said it had not been significant and, had she been aware of it sooner, that she could have reduced the amount that she owed.

We found CBW had acted unreasonably by failing to read Ms C's water meter, as required, every six months. We also found it was unreasonable not to have informed Ms C that she might have to pay a charge for the visit by Scottish Water and, therefore, we upheld Ms C's complaints.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Ms C for the failings identified by this investigation. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets](http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets).
- Credit Ms C's account for the cost of the visit from Scottish Water.
- Calculate Ms C's average water usage since the meter was replaced and refund any difference between this figure and the sum sought by CBW from her final meter reading.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Evidence CBW now have a process in place to ensure meter reads are taken in line with their obligations as a licensed provider.
- Ensure staff are aware of the importance of timeous apologies where failings have been identified.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.