

SPSO decision report

Case: 201200872, Business Stream
Sector: water
Subject: charging method / calculation
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C was the owner of a trough in a field. In 2008, he had experienced an increase in water consumption. He explained that at that time some work had been undertaken locally on water mains, so it was accepted that the increase was caused by that and the amount due was reduced. Mr C experienced a second increase during 2010. He again identified that work had been undertaken nearby during the relevant period. Business Stream, however, considered a number of possible causes for this increase in consumption and decided there was no evidence that there had been any error or problems with the meter readings. Mr C could not find a leak on the short length of pipe between the public pipe and his trough.

There are a number of possible causes for an increase that occurs over a period of time and then goes back to normal without any leak being fixed. It is not always possible to identify the precise cause and some of the causes are not in the control of Business Stream but the person receiving the supply. Therefore, when a dispute occurs, we assess whether Business Stream has reasonably considered whether there is any evidence of a cause of the increase which could be in the public network. While, in Mr C's case we found they had ruled out most problems that could have been caused by the public network, there was no evidence that they followed up on a particular issue about the recent work that Mr C said had been carried out. Mr C had provided the name of a road, contractor and the location of the relevant development. On this basis, we upheld Mr C's complaint and asked Business Stream to look again at that particular information.

Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- clarify with Mr C the position on the work allegedly undertaken by Scottish Water before pursuing the bill.