

SPSO decision report

Case: 201203651, Business Stream
Sector: water
Subject: meter reading
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that for three years Business Stream had failed to read the meter for a village hall run by a committee of volunteers. As a result Mr C had been unaware that the hall had two meters and that there had been a significant increase in consumption. Once the committee were made aware of the increased consumption they took steps to reduce it.

During our investigation we discovered that, during the three year period, Business Stream had taken meter readings for the hall but in the year before the high consumption occurred they had not taken two actual readings. In addition they had only issued invoices for one meter and had incorrectly identified its location.

As a result Business Stream had addressed the accuracy of the location of the meter and had decided not to backdate the second meter charges to when it was installed. However, we considered that had the invoices accurately described the location of the meter Mr C would have been able to identify that there were two meters instead of one and would have had the opportunity to monitor them. Because Business Stream had not read the meters in line with their policy we were unable to identify when the increase in usage occurred, and we made a recommendation about this.

Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- apologise for the failings identified in our decision letter; and
- consider crediting the account with an amount equivalent to 50 percent of the increased water usage during a specified period.