

SPSO decision report

Case: 201301345, Business Stream
Sector: water
Subject: charging method / calculation
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's business occupies small premises next door to her domestic property. Her business does not have running water, sink or toilet and the water she uses for her business is obtained from her domestic property. Business Stream told Mrs C that because her business had access to water and waste water facilities in her property she was liable to pay for water services for business use. Mrs C questioned whether she was liable for charges as she did not have a direct water supply and only used a small amount of water for her business. She also said that she was previously told that in her circumstances she would not be charged.

During our investigation, Business Stream told us that they had no record of Mrs C previously being told that in the circumstances there would be no charge for the water she used for her business. They said they had reviewed her situation as a result of the complaint, but that her business did have access to water services in her domestic property. Although she was paying for the domestic element of these services, she was not paying for the services she used in connection with her business. We noted that her liability to pay for water for business use had been confirmed and did not uphold this complaint.

Mrs C also complained about the delay in an invoice being sent to her and said that, as a result, she received an invoice in 2013 backdated to 2010. We found that there had been a delay in the SPID (unique supply identification number) being created and her premises being set up on Business Stream's account. We also saw evidence that from 2011 Business Stream had sent Mrs C letters at her business premises, asking her to contact them. We could not, therefore, conclude that Business Stream were wholly responsible for the delay in the invoice but, on balance, we upheld the complaint as we were concerned that there was a delay of almost a year before the property was set up on Business Stream's billing system.

Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- apologise for the initial delay in setting up Mrs C's business property on their billing system; and
- contact Mrs C to discuss the repayment options available.