

SPSO decision report

Case: 201302255, Business Stream
Sector: water
Subject: incorrect billing
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C said that, without explanation, Business Stream began billing him for water and water services. He said he tried to obtain an explanation, but was met with only further demands for payment. Mr C said that he eventually began making payment and also paid towards the arrears that had accrued, but Business Stream insisted that he pay the account in full. Mr C complained that this was unreasonable as Business Stream said in their documentation that they would allow payment terms. He said that, as the owner of a small business, he had been put under extreme stress and pressure.

Our investigation found that, although the first invoice sent to Mr C in April 2011 was incorrectly based on unmetered charges, it was quickly corrected after an employee phoned Business Stream about the error. The next bill, based on metered charges, was correct. Mr C did not pay anything, and over the next months Business Stream tried unsuccessfully to contact him. In late March 2012, they notified Mr C of their intention to discontinue his supply. Mr C then contacted Business Stream to say that he had not received any water bills and they sent him copies. However, Mr C paid only £250, and disputed what he should pay. He continued to do so despite further demands from Business Stream, and although they told him about the charges that would be added to his bill because of the delay in payment. Mr C then asked to pay his account over an extended period, but Business Stream refused, on the basis that he had only paid £250 since the corrected bill was issued in December 2011. We did not uphold his complaint, as we found that Business Stream had acted in accordance with their policy, which had been appropriately applied.