

SPSO decision report

Case: 201303634, Business Stream
Sector: water
Subject: incorrect billing
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C, who is a solicitor, complained on behalf of his client (Mrs A) about Business Stream's handling of non-domestic water charges for her previous property. He complained that they delayed in issuing Mrs A with an invoice and that as they were not aware that a meter had been installed they had not been billing previous tenants of the property. When the meter was discovered, Mrs A was of the view that she was being held liable for all the water charges since the meter was installed.

During our investigation we found no evidence that Business Stream had failed to act on information about Mrs A's property. She had not told them that she was occupying it, as she should have done, and once they discovered that she had taken over responsibility for it they sent her an invoice. We were concerned, however, that they initially charged Mrs A on unmeasured charges, as they had not realised that a meter had been installed, and so needed to make a number of changes to her account. We also discovered that, while Business Stream had not billed Mrs A for water used by previous tenants, they had opened her account on a reading of zero units rather than 40 units, so she had been billed for an incorrect amount of water usage. We considered that this had been poor customer service and upheld Mr C's complaint. We noted that Business Stream had already offered Mrs A some financial redress for their handling of her account.

Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- apologise to Mrs A for their handling of this matter; and
- reinforce the apology and financial redress already offered and credit a further amount to Mrs A's account as a recognition of the time and trouble caused by their failings.