

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201400686, Business Stream  
**Sector:** water  
**Subject:** supply pipe issue  
**Outcome:** not upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C, who owns a small business, complained to us about the installation of a water meter at his business premises. The water meter was fitted in 2007. Several years later there was a leak on a pipe on land to the rear of Mr C's property. This pipe turned out to be connected to Mr C's supply pipe, and he was charged for the water as it had run through his meter. Mr C said that Scottish Water should have surveyed his property when his meter was installed.

In their response, Business Stream said that they were not responsible for leaks in supply pipes on private property. They said that there were no records remaining in relation to any survey of the property in 2007. They had reduced Mr C's bill in relation to the waste water that had not returned to the sewers, and also made him a goodwill payment. However, they did not consider that they had any responsibility to cover the excess water costs.

While there was evidence of injustice, in that Mr C had to pay for water relating to a leak over which he had no control, we did not consider that Business Stream could be held responsible for this. On this basis, we did not uphold the complaint. However, we were concerned about the inconsistency of information held by both Business Stream and Scottish Water in relation to investigations and site visits at Mr C's property, which had led to the matter being unresolved for a number of years. We also found that both organisations had unreasonably expected Mr C to arrange access to other properties to allow them to carry out further investigations and had unreasonably sought evidence from him of repairs to the pipe when Mr C had consistently explained he did not hold this information. Given the inadequate way Mr C's complaint was dealt with, we made the following recommendations.

### Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- waive the outstanding disputed amount on Mr C's account; and
- conduct a review of how they handled Mr C's complaint to identify service improvements for their complaints handling which can be implemented for the future.