

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201404404, Business Stream  
**Sector:** water  
**Subject:** incorrect billing  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained about Business Stream's charging. His building's rateable value had changed but the section of their bill that was based on his rateable value still used the old value. This meant that Business Stream's invoices were higher than they should have been. Following Mr C's complaint, Business Stream amended and backdated their charges but said, in line with the relevant policy, they could not do this for the whole period in question. Mr C was unhappy with this and brought his complaint to us.

Business Stream provided us with two versions of their policy. Both versions were clear that their initial charges were appropriate. The policies differed in terms of Mr C's more recent charges. The old version of the policy said that Business Stream should have amended their charges for the whole period, but the more recent version limited this, and Business Stream had based their position on the more recent version of their policy.

The more recent version of the policy was in force by the time they concluded their involvement in the matter, but it had not been in force when Mr C first contacted them about this. Although we considered it clear that Business Stream had taken steps to address Mr C's concerns, it was also clear that there has been confusion about the relevant version of their policy. Given the difference between the two versions, the fact that Business Stream used the later version materially affected Mr C. We upheld his complaint and made one recommendation.

### Recommendations

We recommended that Business Stream:

- consider making an ex-gratia payment in line with our findings that the lower rateable value should have been applied from an earlier date.