

SPSO decision report

Case: 201406428, Business Stream
Sector: water
Subject: charging method / calculation
Outcome: not upheld, action taken by body to remedy, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C, a solicitor, complained on behalf of a social club that an invoice that Business Stream had sent them for over £10,000 was inaccurate. We found that Business Stream had initially failed to read the club's water meter as required by their metering policy. They had then obtained a meter reading, but failed to issue an amended bill to the club. The club's initial water bills were based on estimates that were much lower than their actual usage at that time. A further reading was then submitted by the club and it was at that stage that Business Stream sent the club a bill for over £10,000 based on actual readings.

We found that had Business Stream obtained meter readings as required under their metering policy, the club would have become aware of their water usage earlier and could have taken steps to reduce this. We were also critical that a bill was not issued after the first reading was obtained. Again, this would have highlighted how much water was being used and would have given the club an opportunity to consider reducing their water usage.

That said, in response to the club's complaint, Business Stream arranged for a meter accuracy test to be carried out. This confirmed that the meter was accurate. They also explained to the club that any leak that would have affected the readings on the meter would have been on their pipework. We found that the bill that had been issued to the club for over £10,000 was based on the meter readings that had been taken. There was no evidence that the bill was inaccurate. In addition, Business Stream had made a credit of nearly £5,000 to the club's account for their delays in taking meter readings. We considered that this had been reasonable and so we did not uphold the complaint.