

SPSO decision report



Case: 202311445, Everflow Ltd
Sector: Water
Subject: Charging method / calculation
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained that Everflow failed to bill them accurately for their water consumption and failed to communicate reasonably with them about their account. C believed that Everflow had breached their contract with C. Everflow did not accept this, noting that the bill increase was primarily due to increases in wholesale costs. They also said that C's water usage fluctuated across the year resulting in uneven charges.

We found that there was evidence meter readings were being recorded on C's account in line with Everflow's obligations as a Licensed Provider. However, the rateable value for C's property appeared to be inaccurate. This should have been resolved or explained during the complaints process. Therefore, we upheld this part of C's complaint.

In relation to Everflow's communication with C, we found that C was sent letters about Everflow's debt collection process. These letters were unclear and inaccurately reflected the legal process in Scotland. They also did not reflect the fact that C was making payments on their account and emailing Everflow about it. Therefore, we upheld this part of C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failure to accurately reflect their property's rateable value and the failure to communicate with them reasonably. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Correspondence about the actions being taken to pursue outstanding payments should be clear, easily understood and accurately reflect the powers of Everflow.
- Everflow must ensure the correct rateable value is used when calculating C's bill.
- Customers should be provided with a copy of their contract.
- Customers should be provided with a specific explanation of the advance billing process.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.