

SPSO decision report

Case: 201203190, Business Stream
Sector: water
Subject: charging method / calculation
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that Business Stream unfairly and unjustly pursued his charity for payment of water and waste water services. He claimed that Business Stream failed to respond to his request for a meter to be installed; unreasonably passed the matter to a debt collection agency, when he was still in discussion with them about the bill; and were wrongly pursuing the charity for payment of services that were the responsibility of their landlord.

We did not uphold Mr C's complaints. Our investigation found that the charity had not contacted a water services provider since they moved into the premises. Business Stream were, therefore, entitled to charge them for the services because they were the service providers before the previous tenant left the property. The property was not fitted with a meter, and Business Stream had correctly charged based on the rateable value. Although Mr C had asked for a meter to be installed, this was after Business Stream issued invoices for payment. They had explained to Mr C how to apply for a meter, but there was no evidence that he followed this up by submitting an application.

We did find that Business Stream had passed the charity's account to a debt collection agency, but also that they had instructed the agency to put a hold on the account, and this was not done. The fault did not lie with Business Stream, and we noted that they took appropriate action once it came to their attention. Finally, although Mr C said that Business Stream failed to act on his advice that his landlord was responsible for some of the charges for services, we found no evidence that the landlord provided the necessary confirmation.