

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201003985, A Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** child services and family support  
**Outcome:** upheld, with recommendations

### Summary

After an incident involving Mrs C and her teenage daughter, Mrs C and her husband (Mr C) complained to the council about the way that social work services handled matters stemming from the incident. In response to the complaint, the council held a complaints review committee (CRC). Amongst other things, the CRC partly upheld the complaint that the council had not shared all documents with Mr and Mrs C. They recommended that the council's head of children's services and resources should meet with Mr and Mrs C to identify the documents said to be missing and to provide them if appropriate. Mr and Mrs C complained to us that their case was unreasonably progressed to the CRC before the council had provided Mr and Mrs C with all the documents they should have had. They also told us that they still disputed that they had now received all the documents.

To investigate this, we obtained all the complaints correspondence and the CRC documentation and made further enquiries of the council. We upheld the complaint as the council did not dispute that they failed to give all the relevant documentation to Mr and Mrs C before the CRC. However, although the council have since provided all the information available, Mr and Mrs C remain adamant that information is still outstanding. We checked the records for the documents they felt were missing, but could not find them. The council said that the documents did not exist, explaining that specific meetings that Mr and Mrs C said took place under the chairmanship of named individuals had not in fact happened. We noted that there were no records of such meetings, but took the view that the council's explanation was reasonable and that it would be disproportionate to pursue this further.

### Recommendation

We recommended that the council:

apologise for their acknowledged failure to provide relevant documentation in advance of the CRC.