

SPSO decision report



Case: 201003049, Scottish Borders Council
Sector: local government
Subject: education; complaints handling
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that, when she complained about her son's deputy head teacher, the council's education department failed to conduct a fair investigation or to handle the complaint within a reasonable time. She also said that they did not give her enough information about the outcome of their investigation into her complaint.

From our enquiries it became apparent that a better approach to investigating Mrs C's complaint would have resulted in a more timely response. While we were concerned about the council's handling of Mrs C's complaint, we did not find any evidence to support her claim that the conduct of the investigation was unfair.

Recommendations

We recommended that:

- the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning issue an apology to Mrs C for the way her complaint was handled and for the delay in response.

We also recommended that when, for clear and justifiable reasons, the council are unable to issue a decision on a complaint within the timescale in their complaints handling procedures, they should, in agreement with the complainant, set revised limits on any extended timeline for bringing the investigation to conclusion. This should be made within the complaints procedure.