

Case: 201003731, South Lanarkshire Council
Sector: local government
Subject: applications, allocations, transfers and exchanges
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr A suffers from a degenerative muscular disease. His sister, Ms C, complained on his behalf. She explained that Mr A lived alone in a ground floor flat and moved about with the use of a wheeled zimmer. She told us that, as the council had failed to resolve access problems to his home, Mr A was virtually housebound. We noted that the council had agreed that the ramp to Mr A's home was too steep for use with his zimmer. Their architect, after inspection, had said that the safest and most appropriate method of access would be to install a step lift. Ms C and her brother did not find this solution acceptable. As, however, our investigation found that the council offered this after considering all the facts and after discussion with their professional officers, we did not uphold Ms C's complaint. (It was Mr A's decision not to accept the council's offer of a step lift. He was free to make this choice even though it appears that installing a lift would resolve his access problems.) We did, however, uphold Ms C's other complaints. After investigation, we agreed that they had failed to carry out adaptation work to allow Mr A access to his front and rear gardens. They had also failed to discuss the close entry system with him prior to installation, and had failed to fit an entry system to his front door. All this meant that Mr A was, indeed, virtually house bound. Finally, there had been confusion over the number of housing application points to which Mr A was entitled. This was clarified as part of our investigation.

Recommendations

We recommend that South Lanarkshire Council:

- apologise to Ms C for giving her incorrect information;
- review the communication between the departments of social work services and housing and technical resources;
- apologise to Mr A for their failure to discuss the installation of the entry system with him; and
- formally apologise to Ms C and Mr A for the confusion over his medical points.