

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201003442, Glasgow City Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** trading standards  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that the council had effectively recommended a tradesperson by giving him a trader's contact details. He was also concerned about the way the council handled his subsequent complaint. When we investigated this, the council said that they did not have a written policy on recommendations, as their standard practice was that they did not make these. We decided that this position was in fact undermined when they provided Mr C with contact details for a particular trader. Whether the council chose to refer to this as a 'recommendation' or not, we took the view that members of the public are likely to consider a trader suggested by an authoritative body such as the council as, effectively, having been recommended. On the complaint handling, we found that the council suitably investigated Mr C's concerns about his consumer complaint. However, they did not look at his concerns about the 'recommendation'. Instead they took the view that a complaint would only be accepted where 'there is evidence of service failure or maladministration on the part of the council'. We found that this was not supported by their complaints process. The council should have been able to investigate and respond to his concerns that their consumer adviser provided him with the trader's contact details.

### Recommendations

We recommend that Glasgow City Council:

- apologise to Mr C for having effectively breached their standard practice of not recommending traders in his case;
- devise a formal, written policy on recommending traders, which should take account of our decision on this complaint; and
- apologise to Mr C for not progressing his complaint in line with their complaints procedure.