

SPSO decision report

Case: 201003024, The City of Edinburgh Council
Sector: local government
Subject: finance - tenancy charges
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained about the council's stair cleaning service which is compulsory for tenants where 50 percent or more of the houses are owned by the council. She said that the charge impacts disproportionately on low paid workers like her brother, who considers it unfair. The complaints we investigated were that the cost of the council's compulsory charges for stair cleaning were not justified, and that the lack of choice, as a council tenant, about whether to participate in the scheme was unfair. The council provided a reasonable explanation of how the charge was calculated. They also explained that they had decided to make it compulsory in order to benefit the 80 percent of their tenants who were on housing benefit. These were discretionary decisions that the council were entitled to make and we cannot question them, despite the disproportionate impact on Ms C's brother.