

SPSO decision report

Case: 201104648, The City of Edinburgh Council
Sector: local government
Subject: policy/administration
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the council would not provide a suitable alternative to the National Entitlement Card in order for him to access the travel concession he was entitled to. Mr C had objections to the nature of the National Entitlement Card, which he described as an identity card. He sent the card back to the council on two different occasions requesting that an alternative, single use for travel card be made available. However, the council did not provide this. Mr C subsequently submitted a formal complaint, and thereafter complained to us about the way the council had handled his complaint.

We did not uphold the complaint that the council failed to respond appropriately to Mr C's request for an alternative card. We noted the scheme was nationally run and managed and it was not for the council to provide alternative versions of access to travel concession. We found evidence that they had contacted the national office to seek advice about Mr C's request. We did, however, note that the council could have told Mr C they had done this, which would have given him more confidence in the process.

We upheld Mr C's complaint about the council's complaints handling. We found this to be poor in a number of ways, including the fact that two of their responses did not reach Mr C, that Mr C had to contact the council to chase up responses, and that some parts of the responses suggested that they had misunderstood the complaints. We noted the council had committed to complying with the new model complaints handling procedure being implemented by the SPSO's Complaints Standards Authority in early 2013.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- issue Mr C with a full apology for the failings identified in relation to the handling of his complaint.