

**Case:** 201001204, Argyll and Bute Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** social work  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that the council had breached National Care Standards by amending their policy in relation to foster carers' ability to claim for travel expenses, and in relation to providing child care at training and consultation days. He also complained about the way the council had handled his complaints.

Mr C stated he was disadvantaged by the amendment to the foster carer's allowance, which meant he could no longer claim for journeys of less than 50 miles. He felt that this expenditure should not come out of an allowance for an individual child, and that he was discriminated against as an individual who lived in a more remote location than other foster carers receiving the same allowance. He also explained the council had failed to provide child care at some training events, which made it more difficult for foster carers such as him to attend.

We did not uphold this complaint, although we criticised the council's consultation process in relation to changing its policy about foster carers' allowances. We found that the change did not breach the Standards and were within the council's discretion. We also found that the council had apologised for failing to provide child care at training events, and did so at subsequent events.

We upheld Mr C's complaint about the complaints handling process. We found there were lengthy delays in him receiving responses at some stages of the process, and that at one stage the complaint went back to someone who had dealt with it at an earlier stage. Mr C also had to request twice that his complaint be responded to by the Chief Executive as per the council's procedure.

## Recommendations

We recommend that the council:

- provide an apology to Mr C for failing to follow its complaints procedure adequately in relation to your complaints; and
- provide evidence of the new complaints handling process, and of staff training in relation to complaints handling.