

Case: 201000351, Fife Council
Sector: local government
Subject: continuing care
Outcome: not upheld, action taken by body to remedy, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C was the main carer for her mother, who was bed-bound after being discharged home from hospital, and who remained so until her death some two and a half years later.

Ms C complained about the council, who were responsible for elements of her mother's care. She said that they delayed over an application for direct payments made before her mother went into hospital; failed to ensure that an appropriate care package was provided; failed to provide respite care; ignored Ms C's power of attorney by convening a meeting of professionals without telling her; and misled Ms C over the issue of equipment, as well as not providing and maintaining clean and functioning equipment.

We did not uphold any of Ms C's complaints, as we did not find that the council had acted wrongly. A care package was in place for about fourteen months, with care supplied by a private firm, but Ms C felt that the hours were inadequate and was unhappy with the quality of care. She met the provider's manager and during the meeting told them that they should not return. An assessment with council officers then took place with a view to establishing a new care package, but Ms C ended this without the assessment being finished. Some issues that Ms C complained about depended on an assessment being carried out, but due to postponements this was not done until some six months after the original package stopped, and the process was not completed before Ms C's mother died.

Although we felt that it was unfortunate that the care package was not reintroduced and respite care provided, we did not find that there was any unreasonable delay attributable to the council. We also found that the meeting of professionals was appropriate in the circumstances. The issue about equipment was in fact resolved some time before Ms C complained to us, and

there was no evidence of a deliberate attempt to mislead Ms C as to who had been responsible for maintaining the equipment.