

**Case:** 201102971, South Ayrshire Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** policy/administration  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that the council had not stored his belongings safely while he was in prison. He had been living in temporary accommodation before beginning his prison sentence in December 2010. His belongings were bagged and tagged by a removals contractor and placed in a council owned storage facility.

When Mr C came to collect them in June 2011, he complained that some of his personal items were missing. He provided lists of items to the council. The council's position was that the belongings bagged and tagged had not been touched or moved during the time in storage. However, at that time the council did not keep inventories of belongings kept in storage. Since October 2011, as a result of Mr C's complaint, they have requested copies of inventories prepared by the removals contractor. However, we found that this does not include a fully itemised inventory.

We upheld Mr C's complaint as we found the current system meant the council could not provide evidence of what exactly they were storing and for whom.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- provide a full apology to Mr C for the failings identified;
- consider Mr C's complaint as a claim via the council's insurers; and
- provide evidence to the Ombudsman that the council ensure they take itemised inventories of the belongings which they accept for storage in their facilities.