

SPSO decision report

Case: 201200326, Falkirk Council
Sector: local government
Subject: capital works, renovation, central heating, double glazing, etc
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the council failed to take reasonable steps to ensure that his aunt's hot water and heating system was properly maintained. He was also concerned that the council failed to deal with his subsequent complaints in a reasonable or timely manner.

Our investigation found that Mr C's aunt had had problems with the hot water and heating system for many years. However, in each case where faults were reported to the council, they had arranged for engineers to visit to attend to them. In addition, the council offered to provide a replacement hot water and heating system in January 2012, but council officers had been unable to gain access to allow this to go ahead. Following our contact with the council they offered again to install a new heating system but Mr C's aunt advised that she did not want this as it would be too disruptive. As we did not find evidence to show that the council failed in their responsibilities to maintain the hot water and heating system we did not uphold this element of the complaint.

We did, however, find that the council took longer than their stated timescale to respond to Mr C's complaint and also failed to consider earlier correspondence as formal complaints.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise to Mr C for failing to identify his complaint at an earlier stage, following his emails of 25 and 29 February 2012, and failing to respond to his complaint within the timescales detailed in their complaints procedure.