

SPSO decision report

Case: 201200400, South Ayrshire Council
Sector: local government
Subject: continuing care
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

In December 2010 Ms C invited her elderly father to her home in England to spend Christmas with her. While he was there, he became ill and was not able to return to his home in the council's area. Ms C had to become her father's main carer. He was assessed in February 2011, after which the council made free personal nursing care payments for him. Ms C then had considerable contact with the council over details of the care package, the number of hours awarded, the degree of retrospection of the award, and issues about respite care.

Ms C first considered complaining to the council in October 2011, and eventually did so in February 2012. After completing its initial stages the complaint was considered at a complaints review committee (CRC) in August 2012, with Ms C participating through a video link. The recommendations of the CRC were reported to the council's leadership panel in October 2012 and Ms C was informed of the outcome two days later.

Ms C complained to us that the council's handling of her complaint was unreasonable. Our investigation focused on five complaints handling issues. One related to information about the complaints procedure in October 2011, three were about delay (in dealing with an initial internal complaint, in supplying a form to request a CRC and a delay in convening that CRC and making recommendations to the appropriate committee) and the fifth was that a summary report did not include a full minute of the proceedings of the CRC.

Our investigation found that there had been delay, and we upheld the three complaints relating to this, but we did not find evidence to support the other two complaints.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise for the delays in dealing with the complaint submitted to them.