

SPSO decision report

Case: 201201215, Orkney Islands Council
Sector: local government
Subject: complaints handling (incl social work complaints procedures)
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr and Mrs C have a teenage son with a disability. They were unhappy with the council's handling of an assessment of their need for an increased respite service and said there was poor communication. They complained to the council's social work service. Their complaint was fully upheld and three recommendations were made and implemented, one on a limited basis. Mr and Mrs C were not satisfied and made a request that their complaint be taken to a complaints review committee (CRC). When that request was not met they complained to us about the council's failure to meet their request and failure to communicate with them.

We upheld both elements of Mr and Mrs C's complaint. Our investigation found that there had been an unacceptable delay in convening the CRC because the council lacked a full panel of appropriately qualified persons. There had also been continuing poor communication by the council in telling Mr and Mrs C about the reasons for this delay.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- convene a CRC at the earliest opportunity; and
- keep Mr and Mrs C informed of progress in convening the CRC.