

SPSO decision report

Case: 201204215, Dunedin Canmore Housing Ltd
Sector: housing associations
Subject: repairs and maintenance
Outcome: some upheld, action taken by body to remedy, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained on behalf of her neighbour (Mr A) about the time it took for the housing association to carry out repair work to address damp and drainage problems affecting his home. Mr A felt the association had ignored concerns he had raised both individually and collectively and was unhappy with the way the complaint was handled. Ms C raised the matter with a parliamentary minister because she was dissatisfied at having to constantly phone and write letters in order to gain the association's attention.

The association explained that the problems identified were significant and a timescale for completion of the work was difficult to provide because more investigative work was required, but they accepted that they could have communicated better with Mr A. They also acknowledged the information Ms C had provided, and had offered an ex-gratia payment to her and to another neighbour as an apology. In addition, they introduced a new customer care centre to improve communications.

It did take around nine months for the damp and drainage problems to be addressed, but the association provided evidence that during that time they were actively working to address extensive problems that affected the whole building. We agreed the circumstances were exceptional, and that their actions were reasonable.

We found the association's responses became more informative as work progressed, but on occasion it seemed that Ms C had to ask for information rather than this being proactively provided. We also upheld the complaint about communication. Overall, we found that their response to the complaint was reasonable, but we took the view that Mr A should have been offered the same redress as his neighbours.

Recommendations

We recommended that the association:

- offer a redress payment to Mr A.