

SPSO decision report

Case: 201204626, West Dunbartonshire Council
Sector: local government
Subject: repairs and maintenance
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C lives in an upper flat in a block of four council flats. Shortly before Christmas she reported water coming into her home from a leaking roof. The council responded after the new year, and provided plastic sheeting in the loft space. Nothing was then done to the roof until July when a scaffold was erected for one day (Mrs C disputes that any work was done on her side at that time). After she contacted the council again, a repair order was issued at the start of August, and roof works including the taking down of a chimney and other repairs were completed by late October. The scaffolding remained up for another six weeks and Mrs C says that at the time of its removal the roof leaks had not been completely attended to. She complained to us that the roof repairs were not carried out within a reasonable time.

Our investigation found that the council's communication was inadequate, as they should have told Mrs C what they intended to do and when. We found it difficult to see from their records exactly what they did plan to do to the roof, and why, but the evidence we saw suggested that repairs were not carried out in a reasonable timescale. We upheld Mrs C's complaint and made two recommendations.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise to Mrs C for the poor quality of their communication to her of the reasons for the delay; and
- if they have not already done so, carry out an inspection to determine whether the downpipes and guttering at Mrs C's home require repair and, if so, inform Mrs C of a timescale target for completion.
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