

SPSO decision report

Case: 201300251, Aberdeen City Council
Sector: local government
Subject: repairs and maintenance
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained on behalf of Mrs A about tenancy charges raised by the council when Mrs A terminated her former tenancy and moved to a new house. There was no pre-termination inspection but after Mrs A left, the council arranged for removal and re-instatement works to take away fittings etc. Mrs A was told that she would have to pay for these, and was given an estimate of £620 excluding VAT. Mrs A replied saying that she considered the works were excessive and disputed several of the items listed. She received no response, and the council's next contact was more than six months later when she received an invoice for £867.11. She asked for a more detailed breakdown, then complained to the council about the charges.

We upheld Mr C's complaints. Our investigation found that the council failed to inspect Mrs A's former home before she left it and that their position at the time on when or whether such inspections should be carried out was inconsistent. We also found that there was unreasonable delay in sending Mrs A the invoice for repairs and that the council had not explained why the final invoice figure exceeded the estimate by so much. We also found that they failed to deal with correspondence according to their published processes and procedures.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise to Mrs A for their failings in handling the complaint; and
- reconsider, in the light of the information in our decision notice, whether there are grounds to reduce the sum claimed in the invoice.