

SPSO decision report

Case: 201300737, Renfrewshire Council
Sector: local government
Subject: policy/administration
Outcome: upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the way the council handled his claim for compensation after he damaged his suit on a protruding screw in a council-owned building. He also complained about their decision to limit the sum they agreed to pay him to the cost of replacing his jacket, rather than the whole suit, about their failure to respond to email correspondence, about the reasons they gave for delay in progressing his claim and said there was a failure to respond to his complaint accurately and promptly.

We found that there was a delay in assessing his claim. The reason for this was the delay in receiving witness statements from the local service. Because of this delay, and because they failed to meet their own time targets, we upheld this aspect of his complaint. We found that the council did respond fully, and accurately, to his complaint. However, because they failed to advise him how to progress it to the next stage, and at the final stage failed to meet their own timescales, we also upheld this aspect of his complaint. As, however, the council acknowledged and apologised for both delays, and as they have now introduced a new complaints process, we made no recommendations.

Although Mr C was dissatisfied with the amount the council agreed to pay to compensate him, we agreed with the council that the complaints process was not the way to challenge this, as the question of legal liability is one for the courts to consider.