

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201300939, The City of Edinburgh Council

**Sector:** local government

**Subject:** statutory notices

**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained to the council about a statutory notice that had been served on his property, and for which the council had told him he was now liable. He was unhappy at having to pay as he said he and his solicitors had tried to find out more from the council about this, both before he bought the property and since, without success. He had a lot of communication with the council about this, and was also unhappy with the advice they gave to solicitors acting on his behalf and how they handled his complaint. He was dissatisfied with the council's responses and complained to us.

We found that the council's responses did not reasonably address his complaints, that their responses to his enquiries about the matter had been unreasonable, and they did not make clear what an apology they provided was related to. Given this, we upheld the complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise unambiguously to Mr C for the poor standard of their communication with him;
- reflect on how the situation came about that Mr C was advised that a manager would be made aware of his contacts and would return calls as a matter of urgency at a time when he had been on holiday, and whether action requires to be taken to ensure this cannot be repeated; and
- remind all staff to ensure that all matters raised by complainants are clearly acknowledged and responded to at all stages of the process.