

SPSO decision report

Case: 201301787, Castlehill Housing Association Ltd
Sector: housing associations
Subject: communication staff attitude dignity and confidentiality
Outcome: some upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that a housing association staff member had given confidential information about him to a neighbour, and complained about this to the association. The manager who responded to his complaint was, however, one of the staff members who Mr C alleged had disclosed this information. Mr C felt that this was not appropriate. Also, as part of the investigation, the manager contacted the neighbour to ask if he had knowledge of the confidential information. Mr C felt that this gave the neighbour knowledge of who had made the complaint.

We were unable to uphold the complaint about disclosure of confidential information because we could find no evidence to support one version of events over another. However, the association acknowledged that they could have handled their investigation of Mr C's complaint better. They agreed that it should have been conducted by another member of staff and they should have contacted Mr C to seek his permission to contact the neighbour. As they also said they would apologise to Mr C for this and assure him that they had identified areas in their complaints handling procedure that they will take steps to improve, we did not need to make any recommendations.