

SPSO decision report

Case: 201303185, The City of Edinburgh Council
Sector: local government
Subject: council tax
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained that the council failed to respond to her complaint that council staff refused to provide receipts when she hand delivered letters to the reception desk at council offices. She told us that she had explained to the council that she did not use email and found it impractical to use registered post, but had experienced situations where council officials had denied receiving correspondence, or important documents had gone astray. She said that she had been told by council staff that the council do not provide receipts.

Our investigation found that the council do not have a policy or process for providing receipts where mail has been hand delivered, but were considering this as part of an ongoing internal review of their practices, which we considered helpful. We said we would ask the council to let us know the outcome of this. However, they were unable to explain why Ms C's complaint about the matter was not dealt with under their complaints procedure, so we upheld that element of the complaint and made recommendations.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- review internal arrangements for the receipt, logging and acknowledging of complaints correspondence to provide assurance that the council fully comply with the requirements of the model complaints handling procedure;
- apologise to Ms C for the failure to deal with her complaints; and
- ensure that the issues Ms C raised in her letters of complaint are dealt with, in line with the council's complaints procedure.