

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201303792, River Clyde Homes  
**Sector:** housing associations  
**Subject:** terminations of tenancy  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained on behalf of his mother (Ms A). Ms A left her housing association property in January 2010. Some months later the association sent her a bill for rechargeable repair work (work carried out by the association that the tenant/former tenant has to pay for). Mr C said his brother phoned the association at the time to query the bill but nothing further was heard. The association sent Ms A two further letters, then nothing more until March 2013 when they sent a statement of account pointing out that the bill remained unpaid. Mr C phoned the association to query the bill and told them that he was to be the contact for his mother's account, as she suffered from health problems. He said he did not receive a response. The debt was then passed to a recovery company who wrote directly to Ms A, which she found distressing. Mr C complained to the association about their handling of the bill, then to us that the association delayed unreasonably in pursuing Ms A for the debt.

Our investigation found that in 2010 the association contacted Ms A three times about the debt. While we accepted that there was a long period during which there was no contact, they had pursued the debt more than once in 2010, which was within a reasonable time. We considered that it would have been reasonable for Mr C (or his family) to have taken steps at that time to ensure that the matter was resolved. We did not uphold Mr C's complaint, and we also noted that the association had already apologised for the time taken, provided an explanation and reduced the bill. However, we did highlight to them that they should consider how they pass information to their recovery company as it appeared that the association did not tell the company that correspondence should be with Mr C, who was acting on behalf of Ms A.