

SPSO decision report

Case: 201304076, Aberdeen City Council

Sector: local government

Subject: policy/administration

Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

When Mr C's aunt moved into a nursing home, the council provided interim funding for her fees until they could complete the appropriate financial assessment. Once this was done, they tried to recover the cost from Mr C. He complained that there was confusion about how much was owed. The council investigated and upheld Mr C's complaint. They found three main errors. They had originally charged for an additional week's care, requiring the invoice to be amended; and the nursing home had charged the council at an outdated rate for part of this time and the invoice again had to be reissued. Finally, there was a numerical typing error in one of the council's letters which meant that the amount shown as the balance owed was wrong.

We noted the problems that they had found, and what they had done to address these. However, we also found another error in the correspondence. The council had written to Mr C's solicitor to explain that the weekly rate changed on 1 April 2013. They then wrote to him again less than two weeks later to say that the change took effect from 8 April 2013. Taking everything into account, we upheld Mr C's complaint. As, however, the council had provided documentary evidence to show what they had already done to prevent this from happening again, we made only one recommendation.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise to Mr C for the confusion in their handling of this matter.