

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201304103, Waverley Housing  
**Sector:** housing associations  
**Subject:** repairs and maintenance  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr A was a tenant of the association. Mrs C, who is a support worker, complained on his behalf that the association did not deal competently with his complaints about gas safety concerns. From the evidence we saw, however, we were satisfied that the association acted appropriately to deal with these.

Mrs C also complained that the association did not provide adequate and appropriate assistance to Mr A when there was no heating or hot water in his home over a weekend in October. They had offered Mr A a small amount in recognition of the inconvenience caused to him, which he had not accepted. Our investigation found that Mr A had undergone surgery, which required him to be careful about his personal hygiene, and he also had temporary care of his young son. The association were aware of his personal circumstances and Mrs C had raised concerns with them about the lack of heating or hot water in Mr A's property that weekend. The association's response was to suggest that Mr A should contact family or friends to see if he could stay with them and/or use their washing facilities or use the local swimming pool over the weekend. They also supplied him with two temporary heaters.

Given the time of year, Mr A's state of health and the fact that he had his son in his care, we considered Mr A's situation to be an emergency. We found that the association had failed to properly appreciate the adverse effects the problem had on him and his son and had not taken all reasonable action to help him, and the recommendations we made reflect this.

Mr A also claimed reimbursement for additional gas usage, which the association refused based on the evidence he gave them. We were satisfied that this decision was reasonable, although we made a recommendation as we thought that the association should have been more proactive in communicating the findings to Mr A or Mrs C.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the association:

- review how they communicated with Mr A and ensure any improvements identified are taken forward when dealing with tenancy repairs;
- issue Mr A with an apology for the failings identified; and
- pay Mr A the the maximum amount payable under their policy for unreasonable delay in completing an emergency repair.
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