

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201305515, West Lothian Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** communication staff attitude dignity and confidentiality  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Miss C, a council tenant, complained about various aspects of the services she had received from the council. She complained that a warning marker had been put on her records, and had not been reviewed in line with policy. This marker indicated that staff should visit her in pairs. The council acknowledged that a warning indicator had been put on some of her records, and had not been reviewed, and they apologised for this. They gave assurances that none of her other records had indicators on them, but Miss C questioned this. We did not find any evidence of any other warning indicators, but were critical of the consistency of the information given to Miss C in relation to these indicators. In light of Miss C's complaint, the council told us that they had revised their procedure for recording warning indicators on customers' case notes.

Miss C also complained that there were numerous repairs required to her property, which had not been resolved by the council. We found that the council had tried to engage with Miss C on numerous occasions since she moved into her property to carry out the necessary repairs, but that they had not been able to get access to her property or she had not been satisfied with the work they had undertaken. We found that, while there were still outstanding repairs, they had made reasonable efforts to try to resolve these issues.

Miss C also expressed concern that the council had not made reasonable adjustments in the way they provided their housing services, despite informing them of her mental health needs. We identified a range of adjustments that the council had made to their services to meet Miss C's needs, in line with their policies. However, we considered that it would have been helpful for them to have procedures in place to assist staff with identifying and recording reasonable adjustments for their customers.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- undertake an impact assessment of the revised procedure on protected characteristics, and amend the procedure in line with the findings;
- take steps to ensure that all warning markers are reviewed annually, and provide evidence of the steps taken;
- apologise to Miss C for the confusing information that they provided in relation to staff visiting in pairs and the marker on her records;
- consider introducing a procedure for the agreement and recording of reasonable adjustments for customers with disabilities;
- agree and record reasonable adjustments to facilitate Miss C's access to their housing repairs service; and
- consider identifying potential advisers within the council to provide information and assistance on a range of disabilities, to improve staff awareness and facilitate access to services for those with disabilities.