

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201400303, Bridgewater Housing Association Ltd  
**Sector:** housing associations  
**Subject:** communication/ staff attitude/ dignity/ confidentiality  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C said that the housing association had not given him accurate information about whether he was liable to pay the spare room supplement (commonly known as 'bedroom tax'). He complained that they had led him to believe he would be liable, and this had caused him considerable distress.

Our investigation found that the association relied on information from the council about an individual's liability to pay the supplement. They provided information to tenants about the proposals and wrote jointly with the council setting out the new rules for tenants under pensionable age. According to the association's records, Mr C had attended a meeting where he was told that, as he was a pensioner, he should not be affected by the supplement, though Mr C disputes this.

In coming to our decision we took several factors into consideration including that the council were the final arbiters on who was liable to pay, and the chief executive's view that it would not have been unreasonable to expect the housing officer to have contacted the council to clarify the matter on Mr C's behalf. However, we also considered that Mr C could have tried to clarify this with the council himself. As the evidence available to us pointed to Mr C having been informed at the meeting that he would not be affected by the spare room supplement we did not uphold his complaint.