

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201401555, Glasgow City Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** parks, outdoor centres and facilities  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C complained that the council failed to cut back trees outside her property. Ms C told us the trees were overhanging her house to the extent that they were nearly touching her roof. Ms C said her television reception had been affected, and she was living in constant darkness on the side of her house facing the trees, which meant she had stopped using her living room due to the lack of natural light. Ms C said her roof was black with moss from the trees, and she had to clean up leaves and bird droppings regularly.

We found that the council had told Ms C the trees would be dealt with; however, nearly a year later, the work had not been carried out. The council said there was a breakdown in communication between work teams, which led to confusion between shifts and, as a result, there was a delay in the work being started. We upheld Ms C's complaint as it was unacceptable that the work had not been carried out.

In our recommendations to the council, we had asked them to arrange for Ms C's roof to be cleaned. The council refused, and so we asked them to make her a goodwill payment of £100 to Ms C instead. The council again refused. Their reason, in both instances, was that payment or any works other than the actual tree works was disproportionate to their failure to deal with the trees. We were disappointed by the council's intransigence as, in our view, it was entirely reasonable for the council to make a tangible expression of regret, in line with our office's guidance on apology, given the effect that their very poor service had on Ms C.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise to Ms C for failing to deal with the trees outside her property;
- provide Ms C, in writing, with a date for the work to be carried out on the trees, and copy that communication to us;
- draw up an action plan to ensure that such delays do not happen again, and copy the action plan to us.