

SPSO decision report

Case: 201402200, Blackwood Homes
Sector: housing associations
Subject: complaints handling
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained that the association had not responded to her online enquiry form submissions and had not told her what was going to be done about the landscaped area in front of her property. Ms C also said that they had not kept her updated about her status on the housing transfer list or reminded tenants of their responsibility for their pets, following a noise complaint.

The association said that they had had problems receiving online form submissions, and recognised that one of Ms C's emails was received but not acted on. They went on to say that they had new gardening contractors and would be discussing with them the best way to manage the landscaping. The association said that they had sent Ms C reminder letters about her status on the transfer list, but as they were not responded to, they had removed her. They had, however, reinstated her once they became aware she wished to remain on the list. They confirmed that they had sent letters to tenants about their pets.

We found evidence that the association had written to tenants about their responsibilities for their pets, and we considered their actions about the landscaping reasonable. We, therefore, did not uphold these two complaints.

We recognised that the association had experienced problems with how they were managing incoming emails and the steps they had taken to correct that. However, it would have been appropriate for them to have apologised to Ms C for not following up on the email they had received from her. We also found evidence that they had incorrectly sent the transfer update letters to Ms C's previous address. We made recommendations to address these issues.

Recommendations

We recommended that the association:

- apologise to Ms C for failing to apologise to her in the original complaint response;
- apologise to Ms C for incorrectly addressing her transfer update letters;
- restore Ms C's position on the transfer list to the point she would have been at if she had not been removed; and
- update systems to ensure the correct address is used when issuing letters to tenants.