

SPSO decision report

Case: 201402725, Falkirk Council
Sector: local government
Subject: nursery and pre-school
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr and Mrs C's son was not allocated a place at their first choice of nursery, and they couple complained that the council did not follow their policy in terms of deadlines for applications and allocation meeting dates when places were allocated. The council investigated Mr and Mrs C's complaint, and advised that they had exhausted the appeals process as laid out in the nursery education admission policy and both stages of the council's complaints procedure.

Mr C then brought his complaint to us. We reviewed the correspondence between him and the council, as well as council policies on the allocation of nursery places and complaints handling, and considered the management of waiting lists and the introduction of new policy. We found that the council had operated allocations and nursery place waiting lists in line with policy and, responding to parental feedback, had taken steps to anticipate changes being introduced in their new policy. We found that Mr C's son was not disadvantaged by the council's actions. Although we did not uphold Mr C's complaint, we found that the council's responses to it were sometimes confusing and contradictory, and so we made a recommendation.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise for the lack of clarity in their responses to Mr C's complaints.