

SPSO decision report

Case: 201402759, Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership

Sector: housing associations

Subject: repairs and maintenance

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Miss C rents a property from the housing association. Over a number of years she experienced problems with the plumbing in her kitchen which affected her washing machine. She said she had to replace five washing machines at a substantial cost. She complained that, although the association ultimately fixed the problem, it took them several years to do so, and they refused her request for reimbursement of the cost of the replacement washing machines. Miss C also complained about the standard of other maintenance work carried out at her property. She said that this left her family unable to use the bedrooms. She felt that her rent should be reduced as a result of this.

We found that Miss C first raised the problem with her plumbing in 2011. We accepted that this was not resolved after two visits from a plumber, however, she did not raise the matter with the association again until 2014. As such, we were not critical of the association for failing to carry out further investigations until 2014. The cause of the plumbing problem was identified, but it was not resolved for five months due to an administrative error. We were satisfied that the association acknowledged and apologised for this oversight, and offered compensation in line with their policy. As Miss C did not provide evidence of her out-of-pocket expenses or the damage to her washing machines, we found it reasonable for her claim to be rejected.

We acknowledged that Miss C had found the other maintenance works to be disruptive, however, we were satisfied that the association considered whether temporary relocation to another property was required. We also found that work was carried out in line with their repairs and maintenance policy, and that the minimum standards expected of them were met.