

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201403209, Aberdeen City Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** secondary school  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained about the way that his child's school managed a residential trip. Mr C's child has special needs and required medication to be administered by staff during the trip. Mr C was concerned that medication had not been given as instructed and that there was no medication record. Information provided to Mr C by the council during their complaint investigation led him to believe that his child may have been given medication prescribed to another pupil. Mr C also complained that there was a lack of appropriate supervision during a visit to a restaurant. The school later decided that Mr C's child should be excluded from a forthcoming trip. Mr C complained that a medical professional involved in his child's care was not consulted before this decision was reached. Finally, Mr C was unhappy with the way the council had addressed his concerns.

Our investigation found that the school had not kept any record of the medication that was given to pupils during the trip and that they had not retained a copy of Mr C's written instructions detailing timings. Consequently, we upheld Mr C's three complaints regarding medication as the council were unable to provide any evidence that medication had been administered appropriately. Following assessment of the council's complaint responses, we also upheld the complaint that they had not properly addressed his concerns. We found that the council had not responded to all the issues he raised and had not made it clear that they held no medication record.

After considering Mr C's complaints about supervision and consultation with a medical professional, we found that there was no evidence of maladministration on the part of the council. We did not uphold either of these elements of Mr C's complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- issue Mr C and his family with an apology for the failure to keep an accurate record of the medications administered during the school trip;
- provide evidence of how the arrangements for medication on trips have been improved to avoid a recurrence of such failings in future;
- consider whether there are merits in consulting other professionals involved in a pupil's care when completing person-specific risk assessments;
- apologise to Mr C for failing to address his concerns appropriately in the response to his complaints; and
- ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the need to provide a full response to complaints in line with the complaints handling procedure.