

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201406363, Aberdeenshire Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** primary school  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C raised a number of complaints with the council about how she felt the school were failing to provide a safe and supportive environment for her oldest son. Mrs C also complained that the response to her youngest son's allegation about being hit by a teacher was inadequate.

After the council investigated the issues, it found the school considered that some of the incidents could have been handled differently. Whilst the issues were addressed by the school over time, we found that they should have been addressed from the outset given they related to a young child's health and safety, so we upheld this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

We did not uphold Mrs C's other complaints. We identified sufficient evidence to demonstrate that reasonable steps were taken to address her oldest son's support needs at an early stage and measures put in place with appropriate review taking place. There was also insufficient evidence to indicate that there was an issue with him being bullied. Although we considered that the council's response to Mrs C's complaint about her youngest son being hit by a teacher should have been fuller - and we made a recommendation about this - we found that there was clear evidence to demonstrate the school had taken reasonable action to investigate the allegations.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise to Mrs C for not addressing the health and safety concerns in a timely manner; and
- ensure that witness statements are obtained where appropriate, and relevant information is included in complaint responses, in order to demonstrate that the issues have been thoroughly investigated and the outcome clearly explained.