

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201407345, East Renfrewshire Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** policy/administration  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained that, following a flood caused by a burst pipe in an upstairs owner-occupied property, the council delayed in moving her and her family to suitable alternative emergency accommodation within a reasonable timeframe. She was also unhappy that a member of staff had ended a phone call, accusing her and her husband of using inappropriate language. She was also dissatisfied when the council told her that her refusal to lift the laminate flooring in her home had caused the drying process to take substantially longer and resulted in additional damage.

We considered the points she had raised, and found that the council had offered suitable wheelchair-accessible temporary bed and breakfast accommodation on the day of the flood. We noted that the council did not consider that moving house was necessary but had continued to offer temporary bed and breakfast accommodation which Mrs C and her husband refused as being unsuitable, in part because the family pet could not be accommodated. We also noted that Mrs C had initially refused (partly on the basis of advice from their insurers) to agree to the laminate flooring being lifted, and that the council's surveyors were of the view that the delay in lifting the laminate flooring had caused water to filter into the walls and cause additional damage. The council's policy on laminate flooring places responsibility for the lifting and replacement of laminate flooring with the tenant. Finally, although we were unable to determine exactly what was said in the phone call when Mrs C and her husband were accused of using inappropriate language, we did review the council's unacceptable actions policy which gives staff the authority to end calls where they consider the language being used is not appropriate.

As we did not find evidence of administrative failure in the way the council dealt with this matter, we did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.