

SPSO decision report

Case: 201501536, Weslo Housing Management
Sector: housing associations
Subject: improvements and renovation
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Miss C complained that the housing association unreasonably failed to carry out work on her kitchen to the agreed specifications. Miss C raised a number of concerns, including that the association failed to supply and fit a breakfast bar and that the work took longer than the three days suggested by the association. Miss C said that she had to pay to have the breakfast bar installed and that the delay in the completion of the work meant that her daughter, who has a learning disability, had to stay in a caravan for a further week, and Miss C had to pay for this extra week's accommodation.

The evidence suggested that the association agreed to fit a hinged breakfast bar in Miss C's kitchen. The association said that when Miss C's tall fridge freezer was put back in place it was clear that the hinged breakfast bar could not be included in the design. However, Miss C said that she had an under counter fridge, not a tall fridge freezer, when the kitchen was planned and fitted, so the breakfast bar could have been included. We did not see clear evidence that a breakfast bar could not be fitted or evidence that the change in position was explained and confirmed to Miss C at the time. We concluded that the association unreasonably failed to carry out the works to Miss C's kitchen to the agreed specifications and we upheld Miss C's complaint.

It appeared that the reason the work in Miss C's kitchen took longer than expected was due to extensive re-plastering of the kitchen walls and this appeared to have been caused by the removal of Miss C's kitchen wallpaper. There was no documentary evidence indicating that, as Miss C suggested, the association told Miss C to remove the kitchen wallpaper. In these circumstances, we did not see evidence that the association acted unreasonably in this regard.

Recommendations

We recommended that the association:

- feed back our decision on Miss C's complaint to the staff involved;
- put in place a system to record agreed works with tenants and any modifications subsequently required and agreed and ensure their records show when jobs are completed;
- compensate Miss C for the cost of installing her breakfast bar on receipt of appropriate invoices; and
- provide Miss C with a written apology for the failings identified.