

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201504595, The City of Edinburgh Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** council tax  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Miss C and Mr C complained about how the council had processed their council tax and how they had communicated with them about their liability and payments. Miss C and Mr C also complained about how the council responded to their complaint.

Miss C and Mr C missed two council tax payments and on each occasion the council sent them reminder notices. They missed a third payment, and the council passed the debt to a debt management partner (DMP) for collection.

We found that the council had explained the amounts Miss C and Mr C would owe and had set out a payment schedule of when to pay. We also noted the council had appropriately processed the payments they had made. We therefore did not uphold these complaints.

However, we found the council had not used accurate figures in the response to Miss and Mr C's complaint. They also failed to explain that the outstanding amount was from a charge levied by the DMP, over and above the council tax owed. Both of these things had caused confusion and we upheld this complaint.

Furthermore, we noted the council had not provided copies of information held by their DMP, as we would expect, and we made a recommendation to address this.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise for the error identified;
- feed back to relevant staff the outcome of this decision, particularly regarding the importance of explaining all relevant charges; and
- remind relevant staff of the importance of providing all relevant documents to us, including those they can source from external contractors.