

SPSO decision report

Case: 201507940, East Kilbride and District Housing Association Ltd
Sector: housing associations
Subject: repairs and maintenance
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about ongoing issues with damp in her property and how long the repairs for this had taken. Mrs C also complained that the housing association had failed to communicate with her appropriately, and had refused to provide adequate information about the works going on inside her property.

The association accepted it had taken a long time to diagnose the damp problems in the property. They said that this was not unreasonable as the problem had been complex. The association accepted the works had taken too long to complete, but said lessons had been learnt from Mrs C's experience.

We found that the association had taken too long to identify the source of the damp problem in Mrs C's house. This was in part because a new bathroom had been fitted before the source of the problem was identified, and prior to the completion of the bathroom works, Mrs C had provided a privately-obtained surveyor's report to the association recommending more extensive works were required. The association had failed to act on this, which had led to some of the delay. We also found that the length of time taken to complete the works was excessive. Although the association had had difficulties with contractors and their insurance company, there was no evidence of any learning being identified to prevent a recurrence of this problem. We upheld this part of Mrs C's complaint.

We found that the association had, however, communicated appropriately with Mrs C, and we did not uphold this part of her complaint. There was evidence of regular contact with staff at the association and reasonable attempts to manage Mrs C's expectations in terms of the length of time the works were taking.

Recommendations

We recommended that the association:

- provide us with evidence that the installation of Mrs C's bathroom has been reviewed and that any lessons identified are being put into practice;
- apologise for the decision to install the bathroom;
- provide evidence that they have reviewed this case and that any learning has been identified and actioned; and
- provide evidence of the actions they have taken to avoid a recurrence of the delays experienced in this case.