

SPSO decision report

Case: 201607681, Dumfries and Galloway Council
Sector: local government
Subject: complaints handling (including appeals procedures)
Decision: upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the way the council handled a complaint he had made. He said it had taken too long for the council to respond, and that they unreasonably failed to progress his complaint to the next stage even though he indicated he was still dissatisfied.

We found that although Mr C was clearly dissatisfied with the council's response generally, his correspondence with them did not clearly state that he wanted to take his complaint to the next stage. We found that whilst he could have made this clearer, best practice would have been for the council to check this with him on receipt of his email.

We found that the council then missed further opportunities to check whether Mr C wanted to progress his complaint, as they should have done. Consequently, Mr C's complaint was not addressed in a timely fashion.

We upheld Mr C's complaint but decided, on balance, not to make any specific recommendation. However, we did ask the council, in conjunction with the senior manager or managers responsible for handling complaints, to identify any further learning and improvement in a proportionate way.