

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201608133, Orkney Islands Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** applications, allocations, transfers & exchanges  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C, who has multiple sclerosis (MS) and cognitive/mental health difficulties, said that the council failed to take these matters into account when dealing with her housing transfer. She said that as a consequence, she felt pressured and suffered a breakdown. She said she felt that she was camping in her new home which was unsuitable. She further complained that she was held responsible for repairs to her former home, which was unreasonable.

In response to her complaint, the council said that they had acted in terms of Mrs C's request for single storey accommodation which was suitable for wheelchair access, but that in the 12 years of her being a council tenant prior to her visit to their offices, they had been unaware that she had any medical needs. It was at this time that Mrs C advised of her MS. However, she made no mention of other illnesses or problem for which she required support. Mrs C was subsequently allocated new, ground floor accommodation which she accepted, and shortly afterwards made an application for support mentioning her cognitive and memory problems. Two support staff were allocated to her and worked with her for over a year. They made over 60 visits and she was also helped with her rent. While Mrs C qualified for a removal grant, the council said that this was reduced to take into account repair costs required to put her former home into a lettable condition.

We made further enquiries of the council and found that after Mrs C first advised the council of her request to move, she attended their offices ten months later to confirm her request. The application form she completed indicated that she had MS but no further need for support. It was only after she accepted the offer made to her that Mrs C revealed the extent of her illnesses and her associated needs. Support officers were allocated to help her for an extended period of time and there was no evidence that she had been put under pressure to accept the offer made to her or to rush her move. We also found that on leaving her former home repairs had been outstanding, the costs of which had been deducted from her removal grant in accordance with existing council policy. Mrs C's complaint was not upheld.