

SPSO decision report

Case: 201608697, West Lothian Council
Sector: local government
Subject: policy/administration
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained to the council following an upgrade to her heating system. She told us that after the work was carried out she noticed that her furniture, carpet and other personal items had been damaged and she submitted an insurance claim to the council. The council denied responsibility for causing damage to her property. She complained that the council unreasonably delayed in the handling of her insurance claim. The council offered to have her carpet re-laid as a goodwill gesture. Mrs C complained that the council delayed in repairing her carpet.

Regarding the insurance claim, our investigation found that the insurers requested a report from the council. However, the council employee that received the request was on sick leave and this was not picked up by another member of staff. We upheld this complaint and fed back to the council that they should consider reviewing their internal procedures to ensure cases are progressed while a member of staff is on leave. Our investigation also found that the council took 19 weeks to repair the carpet and we considered this to be unreasonable. We upheld this complaint and asked the council to provide Mrs C with a written apology.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Write to Mrs C to apologise for the unreasonable delay.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.