

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201700213, Renfrewshire Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** repairs and maintenance  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained about the council on behalf of his mother (Mrs A) who is a council tenant. Mr C said that her property had been in a state of disrepair with issues including repeated boiler breakdowns, faulty electrics, persistent roof leaks and draughty windows. Mrs A had been reporting and complaining about these issues for a number of years but the council had only recently brought the property up to a reasonable state of repair. Mr C considered that the time taken to repair the property and provide a final response to Mrs A's complaints had been unreasonable.

We found that Mrs A had been complaining to the council, about a number of similar repair issues, for several years. There were a number of repairs mentioned in the complaints correspondence which were not recorded on the council's repair log, meaning it was difficult to assess whether these were completed within a reasonable timescale. The council told us that they did not record the outcomes of their inspections. This meant that it was very difficult to assess the ongoing condition of the property or evidence whether or not the faults being reported persisted throughout the period in question, or only required repair later in the process due to damage or deterioration.

We considered it was likely that there were unreasonable delays on the part of the council. Additionally, the reason we were unable to confirm this was due to insufficient record-keeping. We also found that the council's complaints handling had been unreasonable as they delayed in referring Mrs A to ourselves. Therefore, we upheld both of Mr C's complaints.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mrs A for failing to appropriately handle the repairs to her property and to both her and Mr C for the failures in complaints handling. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsa.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance](http://www.spsa.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance).

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- The repair log should be a full and accurate record of all repairs completed.
- A clear record should be made of repair inspections, detailing the inspector's findings.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- All complaints should be handled and progressed in line with the complaints policy.

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.