

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 201800377, Falkirk Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** child services and family support  
**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that the social work department unreasonably failed to act when he made reports of risk to his children, and that their arrangements for him to have access to his children were unreasonable.

We took independent advice from a social work adviser. We found that in relation to the council's response to Mr C's reports of risk to his children, whilst they had been responsive to these reports and had taken reasonable action in the majority of instances, on one instance they had changed their plans for following up a report without recording the reasons why. We further found that on one occasion a discussion between staff in which decisions were made regarding action to be taken hadn't been recorded; and that there were some delays in signing off on a child protection case conference record and implementing one of the actions agreed at the case conference. Therefore, we upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

In relation to the council's arrangements for Mr C to have access to his children, we found that the council had reasonably assessed Mr C and his children, encouraged Mr C to suggest activities, and ensured they had enough notice from all parties for contact to go ahead. We found that the council's handling of this matter was reasonable and, therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mr C for failing to record why the plan for following up one instance of his report of risk to his children was changed, failing to document a discussion between the social worker and child protection coordinator and the delay in implementing one of the actions agreed at the child protection case conference. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance](http://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance).

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

- When plans for follow-up are changed, the reasons for this should be recorded.
- Discussions regarding cases between staff members in which decisions are made should be documented.
- Deadlines as stipulated in the Child Protection Procedures and Guidance should be adhered to.
- Actions agreed at child protection case conferences should be taken forwards in a timely manner.