

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201805111, Perth and Kinross Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C was admitted to hospital following a stroke. In order to prepare for his discharge, the council arranged for a homecare service to be put in place. Due to his level of personal savings, Mr C was advised that he would be required to pay the full amount of his care. Mr C complained to the council that he was given the incorrect information in relation to his care costs and that the council unreasonably invoiced him for a larger amount of care costs than he was previously advised.

The council acknowledged they provided Mr C with the wrong information about the cost of his care package on a number of occasions, and they apologised for this. However, as Mr C signed a document to indicate he understood he would be required to pay the full cost of his care, the council considered he should still be liable to pay the full cost of his care.

We took independent social work advice. It is not disputed that Mr C was required to pay the full cost of his care; however, we considered whether it was reasonable that the council insisted Mr C should pay the full charge. Our investigation found that the council failed to provide Mr C with clear written information about what his care costs would be from the outset. Mr C was wrongly informed that his weekly care charge was his monthly care charge. We also considered it was unreasonable that the council took almost eight months to resolve the issue and inform Mr C of his correct weekly charge. We upheld Mr C's complaints.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- The council should reconsider their decision not to reduce care home costs in light of the failings identified in this investigation.

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

- The council should take steps to improve their processes by ensuring that more accurate information is provided at the outset and that the invoice is issued more promptly after the financial assessment is signed.