

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201806506, Dundee City Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** child services and family support  
**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C complained that the council unreasonably failed to carry out parenting capacity assessments to establish whether Ms C was able to look after her child (Child A). Ms C also complained that the council failed to carry out reasonable assessments to inform decisions about Child A's care.

We took independent advice from a social work adviser. We found that decisions made regarding the parenting assessments were reasonable. Therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of the complaint. However, we noted that changes to the planned actions in relation to these assessments should have been discussed and recorded with 'Looked After Child' (LAC) review minutes, with the reasons recorded as to why the plan had changed.

We found that while the assessments of Child A's parents were reasonable, based on the information available, the kinship carer assessment was unreasonably delayed, which was a key assessment to inform future decisions about Child A's care. It was also found that not all LAC reviews were appropriately documented or carried out in a reasonable timescale. We upheld this aspect of the complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Ms C for the delay in the kinship carer assessment and the statutory LAC reviews being carried out. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/informationleaflets](http://www.spsso.org.uk/informationleaflets).

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

- A kinship care assessment should commence within three days of the placement and be concluded within 12 weeks.
- LAC reviews should be held within six weeks of the placement, then a further review three months from that date and then every six months thereafter.