

SPSO decision report



Case: 201809134, North Lanarkshire Council
Sector: Local Government
Subject: Carer's assessments
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained that the Council had unreasonably failed to assess her needs as a carer. She said that she had suffered considerable stress for over a year as a result of her caring role for her son (Mr A) who has a number of disabilities.

We took independent advice from a social worker. We found that the council's delay in completing a carers assessment was unreasonable. In addition, the report lacked any analysis of need and recommendations. It was clear that over this period Ms C was finding the situation extremely challenging and was under considerable stress. In view of these failings, we upheld this complaint. The council had accepted there was a delay in completing the carers assessment and had apologised for this.

Ms C also complained that the council had failed to provide reasonable care to Mr A. In relation to this aspect of the complaint, we found that there were failings in relation to communication and a lack of evidence to show the reasoning around decision-making. We upheld this complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Ms C for these failings. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [HYPERLINK "http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets"](http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets) www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets .
- Review Ms C's carers assessment report in light of the findings of this investigation.

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

- There should be a clear summary of the council's involvement and why a case is being closed to ensure that there is transparency and a clear understanding of the reasons for this action.
- Account should be taken of someone's preferred means of communicating, unless there is a reason this is unreasonable or inappropriate.
- Assessments of this nature should set out the kind and/or level of support recommended or required.
- While there is no specific time frame for carrying out assessments, the progress of one should be monitored and addressed if it appears to be drifting and taking longer than anticipated, and action should be taken to correct this.

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.