

SPSO decision report



Case: 201810789, The City of Edinburgh Council
Sector: Local Government
Subject: Repairs and maintenance
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained that the council had failed to reasonably maintain and repair their property. We found that there had been delays in carrying out repairs to C's heating system and windows and that the level of communication about the delays was unreasonable. We also found that C was left without central heating for a period. Therefore, we upheld this complaint.

C also complained that the council failed to maintain an agreed reasonable adjustment that they would not be contacted or visited in the morning. C said that despite complaining to the council about breaches to the agreement, the problem continued. We found that the limited capacity of the council's systems to record, effectively communicate and implement an agreed adjustment was a significant factor in the council's failure to provide C with a service in line with the agreed adjustment. Although comments in the council's complaint files indicated that officers were aware of these issues, it was unclear to what extent, if any, steps were taken to escalate or resolve the issues with the systems. Therefore, we upheld this complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the delays in carrying out the repair works and the poor communication in connection with this, and the repeated failure to adhere to the agreed service adjustment. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.
- Once C's central heating system had been replaced, consider a claim from C for reimbursement of the extra expense they incurred due to the faulty boiler operation.
- Provide C with a schedule for the repair work and temporary rehousing arrangements.

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

- The council should have effective systems in place to ensure that the housing services provided can be adjusted in line with the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled customers.
- Where the council have informed a tenant they will carry out repair work, officers should keep the tenant updated about any delays. Tenants must have a satisfactory provision for heating their property.

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.