

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 201901967, Renfrewshire Council  
**Sector:** Local Government  
**Subject:** policy / administration  
**Decision:** not upheld, recommendations

### Summary

C complained about the way the council handled their request for their child (A) to attend a specific secondary school. C considered that their request should have received priority over others as A had a sibling in the school. In order to determine catchment places for the school, the council conducted a ballot. A was not allocated a place during the ballot and was unable to attend the school. C remained dissatisfied with the council's handling of their complaint and brought the complaint to us.

We found that the council had followed their policy to allocate catchment places. We were satisfied that, throughout the process, the council kept C appropriately informed about what was happening. At the end of the process, the council also informed C of their right to make a placing request. We did not find that the council had treated C and A less favourably than other families in the same position. We did not uphold C's complaint.

During our consideration of complaint handling, we found that the council initially failed to correctly log C's correspondence as a complaint and handle it in line with their procedure. This resulted in the complaints process becoming unnecessarily prolonged by over two months. Therefore we made a recommendation under section 16G of the SPSO Act 2002, which requires the Ombudsman to monitor and promote best practice in relation to complaints handling.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for failing to handle their complaint appropriately. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets](http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets)

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.