

SPSO decision report

Case: 201902140, Perth and Kinross Council
Sector: Local Government
Subject: adoption / fostering
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C adopted a young child, however the placement ended after a short period of time and the child was removed from C's care. C complained to the council about the lack of support provided during the adoption placement, that the placement ended abruptly and that the council did not follow all of the recommendations in the disruption report completed after the ending of the placement.

The council advised that support was offered to C, however they recognised that an additional meeting to review the situation and offer practical support may have been helpful. The council also acknowledged the placement ended abruptly but considered it was managed well. The council said they implemented the recommendations detailed in the disruption report.

We took independent advice from a social worker. We found that the council failed to recognise the need to formally review the child's plan and respond to C's requests for support. We found that the council failed to ensure the placement ended in a more planned way or to recognise that more weight should have been given to a child's experience of significant trauma. We also found that the council unreasonably delayed in responding to C's complaint. We upheld C's complaints.

Recommendations

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

- The council should ensure that a child's plan (or adoption support plan) includes details of difficulties that may emerge within the adoptive placement and strategies for the support of the child and of the adoptive parents should be built in from the outset of the new placement. Where possible, placements should be ended in a planned way unless there is significant unexpected risk to the child.
- The right of the adopter to request an assessment for an adoption support plan/formal review should be recognised.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- The council should ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly and staff should be familiar with how to respond to a complaint under the appropriate procedure.

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.