

SPSO decision report



Case: 201903216, Aberdeenshire Council
Sector: Local Government
Subject: continuing care
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C, an advocacy worker, complained on behalf of their client (A) who was a single parent who provided the majority of the care for their child (B). B had significant support needs and required 2:1 and sometimes 3:1 care. A employed an additional carer through B's Self Directed Support (SDS) allowance. A submitted a complaint to the council in relation to the support that they provided to help A care for B and for A's opportunities for respite.

We took independent advice from a social worker. We found that while the initial support provision for B was reasonable, when their hours of support were reduced there was a lack of transparency or reasonable explanation in the documentation for how the council came to the decision. This was unreasonable. There was also a lack of a Multi-Agency Action Planning Meetings (MAAPM) assessments until a considerable time after B moved into the council area. We found that the council failed to provide reasonable support to B. We upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Secondly, we found that more action should have been taken to look for appropriate respite care for B to allow A time away from their caring role. We found that it would have been reasonable for the council to have prioritised arranging further carer time. Overall, we found that the council failed to provide reasonable support to A as carer for B. We upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to A for the failings identified. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.
- Decisions to change support packages should be transparent and justifiable.
- Reasonable actions should be taken to consider what options are available to allow A to receive respite away from their caring role.

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

- Information recorded should always be checked for accuracy.
- MAAPMs should be on a regular basis with specified formal review dates.
- There should be transparency in respect of the level of assessed need and changes to the package of care should be clearly explained and evidenced.

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.