

SPSO decision report



Case: 202004993, West Lothian Council
Sector: Local Government
Subject: Neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained that the council failed to reasonably respond to reports of anti-social behaviour that C had made against their neighbours. C felt that the council had not taken their concerns seriously and that they had been passed around between staff members with no one taking a lead role or responsibility for handling their concerns.

We found that the councils procedures and processes for investigating anti-social behaviour were detailed, robust and good practice approaches to handling reports of anti-social behaviour. However, the council failed to provide evidence that these processes had been considered or followed in their handling of C's reports, and made no reference to the specifics of those procedures in their responses to C's complaints or our investigation.

As such, we upheld C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for failing to reasonably investigate and respond to their reports of anti-social behaviour. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.
- Carry out an interview with C under Stage 1 of their process, to ascertain what problems, if any, they are still experiencing, and action those through the remaining stages of the anti-social behaviour procedures, as appropriate.

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

- The council should follow their anti-social behaviour procedures when handling all reports of anti-social behaviour, and clear records should be kept of all steps taken.

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.