

SPSO decision report



Case: 202107648, South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership
Sector: Health and Social Care
Subject: Assessments / self-directed support
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership's handling of supported living arrangements for their adult child (A) with severe learning difficulties and significant support needs.

The partnership approved an assessment of A's needs that included supporting them to move into their own tenancy with one-to-one support. It was noted that, long-term, the preferred option would be for A to move into a shared tenancy. C said that they worked with A's care provider to find a suitable two-bedroom (to accommodate care staff) tenancy for A. The partnership were advised that this work progressed to the point where the care providers were looking to purchase a property for A to live in, and they told C a three-bedroom property should be the focus of the property search to achieve the ultimate aim of A securing a shared tenancy with room for another individual and care staff.

We took independent advice from a social work adviser. We found that the partnership's assessment of A and C's needs was reasonable. We were satisfied that the partnership's reasoning was clear and appropriate in determining that a shared tenancy was the preferred long-term option for A, that the benefits of this (if delivered appropriately) were agreed by all involved, and that the partnership's communication with C and other involved parties was clear and frequent throughout. We did not find that A's assessed needs changed following the reassessment. However, it was decided at that point that the focus had to switch from providing A with a single tenancy to a shared tenancy. This decision was in line with the agreed long-term plan for A but was also, as the partnership described it, a material change from the initial proposal. It was also a change made without any prior preparation by the partnership in terms of finding a suitable joint tenant or three-bedroom property. We found that this caused an unreasonable delay to A being able to move towards independent living given plans were already advanced to secure a single tenancy that would have met A's assessed needs. With this in mind, on balance, we upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C that the partnership's decision caused an unreasonable delay to A's move to independent living. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

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

- The partnership review their handling of A's case with a view to identifying how they may better investigate the viability of all options for independent living and progress these before reaching decisions that effectively reduce those to a single option.

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.