

Case: 201004172, South Lanarkshire Council
Sector: local government
Subject: complaints handling (including appeals procedures)
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C's daughter attends a school within the authority of the council. She was experiencing bullying at school, which was having a serious emotional impact upon her. Mr C was concerned that this was affecting his daughter's health and progress at school. He complained that the school did not operate an anti-bullying policy, that it had failed to investigate his complaints about bullying appropriately, and that the council had not followed its complaints procedure when investigating his complaints.

We upheld the complaints in relation to the anti-bullying policy. The school had followed a council-wide policy prior to June 2011, but had not implemented a stand alone policy as recommended within the council-wide policy. We found that until then the school had not in fact had a clear policy about how reports of bullying would be dealt with, or what outcomes and resolutions were to be aimed for. As, however, the school had demonstrated they had introduced an anti-bullying policy in June 2011, we recommended that the council provide evidence that this policy had been implemented and promoted to all pupils and staff at the school.

We did not uphold the complaint in relation to the investigations of bullying. We found that overall the school had taken appropriate steps to investigate incidents, that there had been an appropriate level of enquiry into allegations about other pupils, and also in relation to allegations of harassment by some of the teachers at the school.

We did not uphold the complaint that the council failed to follow its complaints procedure. We found that, although Mr C did not receive a response within the stated timescale at Stage 2 of the procedure, the reason for this was acceptable, as a thorough investigation was being conducted which included the interviewing of all parties involved, and given the complex issues raised which dated back over more than a year. We also found Mr C received

responses from appropriate people in the council at both Stages 2 and 3 of the complaints procedure.

Recommendation

We recommended that the council:

- provide evidence that the school's anti-bullying policy introduced in June 2011 has been implemented and promoted to pupils and staff there.