

SPSO decision report

Case: 201202120, Argyll Community Housing Association
Sector: housing associations
Subject: repairs and maintenance
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C was unhappy with the heating system in the property she rented from a housing association. She complained that it was ineffective, unreliable and expensive to run. She also complained that the association had failed to carry out repairs or to deal with her complaint appropriately.

Our investigation found that the heating system was chosen by the previous tenant, and there had been difficulties with it that had taken months to resolve. We were concerned that the association had not assessed Ms C's medical information before offering her the property. We also found that although she had been told the location of the property's Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), which had indicated that the efficiency of the main heating was very poor, the EPC and the potential running costs of the heating system had not been explained to her. We found no evidence that general repairs had not been carried out, or that the association had failed to investigate Ms C's concerns about dampness but we were concerned that it took some months before the heating system was repaired, especially as the problems had occurred during the winter.

We, therefore, upheld Ms C's complaints that the system was inappropriate and that the association did not carry out repairs appropriately. We found no evidence, however, that they failed to deal with with Ms C's complaints.

Recommendations

We recommended that the association:

- issue Ms C with an apology for the failings identified in the complaint;
- ensure that both a copy and a full explanation of the EPC is provided to prospective tenants before a tenancy agreement is signed; and
- ensure that when they receive a completed Health and Housing Need form from a prospective tenant that this is assessed and taken into account before a tenancy agreement is signed.