

SPSO decision report

Case: 201300650, Aberdeen City Council
Sector: local government
Subject: improvements and renovation
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained to us on behalf of his elderly parents, who he said found it expensive to heat their home because of old draughty windows. Two windows had been replaced but the council had decided not to replace the remaining windows, although they had resealed some. Mr C said this had not made any appreciable difference. He said that a clerk of works from the council had said that the windows would last another eight years and if they were replaced, everyone else would want this. Mr C believed that the council had replaced windows in newer houses than that of his parents, and felt that the criterion for replacement should be based on the condition of the windows, not their age.

When we investigated this, the council told us that their programme of replacement was based on need. They told us also that there had been a robust assessment into the condition of the windows in Mr C's parents' house. However, there was no record of the assessment, as reports were usually provided verbally and dealt with at the time. We considered that it was unreasonable not to hold records of assessments or their outcome. We upheld Mr C's complaint about this, and made recommendations. We did not uphold his complaint about newer houses having windows replaced as the council clarified that it is not age but condition which dictates this decision, but we made a related recommendation.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- undertake a further inspection within 10 working days of the issue of our decision and ensure a report is produced;
- review their current procedures where a request for repair or replacement works is requested, and put in place improvements to record keeping, especially where assessment has found that limited or no works are required; and
- review their decision not to replace the windows in Mr C's parents' house, based on a fresh reassessment of the windows, and notify Mr C of the outcome of the reassessment and whether this has changed the decision about replacement.