

SPSO decision report

Case: 201400811, Aberdeen City Council
Sector: local government
Subject: public hygiene/shops/dairies/food processing
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained to the council's environmental health department about an out-of-date food product he had bought in a supermarket. He was unhappy with the way the council handled this, and complained to us of delay and failure to deal with his complaint properly and fully.

Our investigation found that there had been an initial delay, and the council had not responded within two working days - the timescale required under their complaints handling procedure. However, in their investigation the council acknowledged this and had already apologised to Mr C for it. We found that their investigation into the food safety issue was thorough and followed council procedures and relevant legislation, and that they had sent Mr C a detailed decision letter. Overall, we did not find evidence of unreasonable delay. Our investigation did, however, find that they had not responded fully to Mr C's further representations, including that they notified the supermarket of their decision before telling Mr C.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- offer a formal apology to Mr C for failing to address all of his points fully; and
- review their practices on the timing of informing parties of the decision taken by the council with regard to complaints about food safety issues.