

SPSO decision report

Case: 201402719, Glasgow City Council
Sector: local government
Subject: policy/administration
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the council failed to make reasonable adjustments to their service in order to meet his needs. He went to their office to apply for housing benefit, but was unable to use the customer computers to complete an online application due to his disabilities. He, therefore, requested a paper application but due to the nature of his disabilities he needed this on coloured paper and the council only kept stocks of white paper. In complaining about this, Mr C also raised concerns that the council's postal correspondence was sent to him on white paper.

The council noted that they had various options in place to allow customers to access their service. They explained that appointments can be arranged with staff, who can assist with the completion of online applications. Alternatively, customers can apply over the phone or can apply online by visiting their website. We noted Mr C had been able to submit a phone application on the same day he visited the council office. The council also explained that customers can access their benefit accounts online and all correspondence can be viewed. They said that, by offering these alternatives, they were complying with their duties under equality legislation.

As Mr C was able to submit an application over the phone, we were satisfied that there was an accessible option for him and he was not prevented from claiming benefit. We were also satisfied that a reasonable alternative existed for him to view general correspondence, by accessing his online account, and we were not aware of any barriers preventing him from doing so. Although it was not for us to reach a view on the legal position, we were assured that the council had carefully considered whether their service was equipped to meet Mr C's needs, and we did not uphold his complaint.