

SPSO decision report

Case: 201405561, South Lanarkshire Council

Sector: local government

Subject: council tax

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the council's sheriff officers unreasonably visited his home three times during a three-month period, and that a member of staff in the council's collections office was rude and evasive during a phone call.

We found that Mr C was asked by the council to make payments to the sheriff officers, but he declined to do so and wanted to pay the council directly. This meant that there was a delay in updating the sheriff officers' records after payment was made. It was as a result of this delay that, when sheriff officers first visited to serve a charge notice, the outstanding balance on the notice was incorrect. They re-attended having updated the outstanding balance but, once again, Mr C had made a payment in the meantime. They withdrew the notice again and reissued it a few days later for the correct value. As Mr C was asked to make payments directly to sheriff officers but declined to do so, we did not consider the delay in updating the account balances to be unreasonable. As a result, we found that the three visits by sheriff officers were not unreasonable. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint. We also noted that the council did not record their phone calls. We were unable, therefore, to reach a conclusion on Mr C's complaint about the tone of the phone call with a council officer.