

SPSO decision report

Case: 201406982, South Lanarkshire College
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: grants/allowances/bursaries
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the college had behaved in a discriminatory fashion in assessing his eligibility for bursary funding. Mr C said that he was medically discharged from his previous employment and was therefore receiving an occupational pension, but only because he had been deemed unfit to work by that employer. Mr C was refused a bursary to cover the cost of his course expenses by the college. He appealed this, but the college said they were bound to apply the guidance provided by the Scottish Funding Council.

Mr C complained that the determination that he would have to fund his course expenses was unreasonable and that the college's bursary policy was not in keeping with the relevant equalities legislation. He also said they had failed to handle his complaint properly.

We took independent advice from an equalities adviser on the equality and diversity requirements the college's policies had to meet. The adviser said that the college were able to evidence that they had considered the impact of these policies and they could not, therefore, be considered discriminatory.

We found the college had reasonably determined Mr C's bursary application as they had followed the appropriate procedures when doing so. Their bursary policy complied with the relevant equalities legislation. We also found that there was no evidence Mr C had made a formal complaint to the college. As there had been confusion over who he had to complain to about the decision not to grant him a bursary, we exercised our discretion and investigated the case. We did not uphold Mr C's complaints.