

SPSO decision report

Case: 201407029, North Lanarkshire Council
Sector: local government
Subject: improvements and renovation
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C accepted the council's offer to undertake insulation improvements on her property as they were undertaking such works on other properties in her street. She agreed subject to certain conditions that the council agreed to. When the works commenced Mrs C was dissatisfied with some of the contractor's actions and raised concerns and complaints with the council. She was given contact details of specific council officers whom she was told would respond to any concerns she had. When Mrs C used the contact details she found her contacts were not responded to or they were responded to by other council officers. She made further formal complaints about the actions of contractors and the council. When the works were completed Mrs C was dissatisfied that the pipework at her home had been replaced with differently coloured pipes. Mrs C complained to the council and remained dissatisfied at the conclusion of their complaints procedure.

We found that the council had failed to honour some of the agreements they had made with Mrs C, that some of the actions of the contractor's and the council's staff had been unreasonable, that council staff had unreasonably failed to respond to some of Mrs C's requests for contact and that they had not responded reasonably to Mrs C's complaints.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise to Mrs C for the failures identified;
- remind relevant staff that, where renovation works to private dwellings are concerned, written agreements should be monitored and their fulfilment of those agreements recorded;
- remind relevant staff and contractors of the importance of not accessing property without notice; and
- make a goodwill payment of £150 to Mrs C in recognition of the failures identified.