

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201501345, Fife Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** complaints handling  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that the council had not handled his correspondence and complaints reasonably. He was unhappy that correspondence he had sent had not been answered, that he had not been able to speak with the complaints handler when he called and that there were inaccuracies in the final response to his complaint.

Following careful consideration of the documentation, the council appeared to have only received one letter. There was no acknowledgement or response sent to Mr C. Mr C then contacted the council on a number of occasions to express his dissatisfaction at not receiving a response. The council did not identify these contacts as a complaint. It was only when Mr C approached us that the council logged a complaint - and used a phone note dated two months earlier as the complaint from Mr C, which led to inaccuracies when referring to timescales in the council's final response. We therefore upheld Mr C's complaint that his complaint had not been handled reasonably by the council. We recommended that they apologise to Mr C for the failings identified by our investigation and remind housing staff of the definition of a complaint and the importance of identifying, logging and responding to complaints and keeping complainants updated as set out in the council's complaints procedure.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- remind housing department staff (including call handlers) of the definition of a complaint and the importance of identifying, logging and responding to complaints and keeping complainants updated as set out within their complaints procedure.