

SPSO decision report

Case: 201507810, East Renfrewshire Council
Sector: local government
Subject: communication, staff attitude and confidentiality
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the council unreasonably failed to follow their Unacceptable Actions Policy when restricting his communication with them.

Over a number of years, Mr C was involved with a website forum which focused on local politics. Material was posted on the forum which in the view of the council was offensive. The council wrote to Mr C advising that they were taking action under their policy and that they would no longer respond to communication from Mr C, whether written or verbal.

Mr C raised a number of concerns about the council's actions, including that they should have issued a warning and that the council's restrictions had no connection with the allegations made against him.

Having reviewed the council's Unacceptable Actions Policy, we upheld Mr C's complaint. We found that the council should have issued a formal warning to Mr C in relation to the conduct they were concerned about. We also found that the council should have provided Mr C with a more robust explanation of why they considered the restrictions on communication to have been necessary.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise for the procedural failings this investigation has identified; and
- feed back the findings of this investigation to the relevant staff.