

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201601878, East Dunbartonshire Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** communication, staff attitude and confidentiality  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about the length of time it took the council to inspect and make safe a damaged wall in the cul-de-sac where she lived, as she was concerned about the health and safety of children who play there. She was also unhappy with the council's communication concerning the planned works on the wall, and their handling of the complaint that she raised with them.

We found that the timescale for inspection of the wall was at the discretion of the council. We therefore did not uphold this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

However, we found a number of failings by the council with regard to their communication and the handling of Mrs C's complaint. We found that there was a delay in the council responding to Mrs C's complaint. The council did not inform Mrs C that they had undertaken an inspection visit or that their decision that the damaged wall did not constitute a hazard for the public. We found that they did not provide regular updates and that when Mrs C did receive information, it was often confusing and contradictory. We therefore upheld these aspects of Mrs C's complaint.

The council apologised for some of these failings and have since repaired the wall.

Mrs C also raised concerns about a faulty fence and we made a recommendation relating to this.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise to Mrs C for the failings identified in this case;
- reflect on the failings identified during this investigation and advise this office of the steps they will take to improve their communication in similar circumstances in the future; and
- advise this office when the planned works on the fence have been completed