

SPSO decision report

Case: 201607662, South Ayrshire Council
Sector: local government
Subject: applications, allocations, transfers & exchanges
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C, who is a council tenant, complained to the council about a number of issues regarding his new property. He complained that the council failed to ensure that his property was made available in an appropriate standard of repair and that they failed to follow their housing allocations policy. Mr C also complained that he was provided with incorrect information about his entitlement to a decoration grant and about his utilities contract. He also said that he was provided with wrong information about anti-social behaviour complaints from a previous tenant, dog fouling and the council's handling of his complaint. Mr C was dissatisfied with the response from the council. He felt that the council did not properly investigate his complaints and that they failed to offer remedies to his upheld complaints. Mr C brought his complaints to us.

We found that the council failed to follow their housing allocation policy as they did not offer Mr C a 'settling in visit' after he moved into his new property and that they failed to ensure that Mr C had the opportunity to choose his own energy provider. We upheld these complaints and recommended the council provide Mr C with a written apology for these failings. We found that the council have already taken steps to ensure that tenants are better informed about their arrangements with their energy providers and we have asked the council to provide us with an update on their improvements. We found no failing in the council's actions regarding the standard of repair in Mr C's property and the decoration grant. We found that the council acted appropriately regarding Mr C's complaints about dog fouling and the information provided to him about the previous tenant's complaints of anti-social behaviour. We also found the council's handling of Mr C's complaint to be reasonable. We did not uphold these complaints.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mr C for failing to follow their housing allocations policy by ensuring that a 'settling in visit' was arranged. Further apologise for failing to inform Mr C about their arrangements with the energy provider for the property. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at: <https://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance>.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.