

SPSO decision report

Case: 201608053, Melville Housing Association Ltd
Sector: housing associations
Subject: applications, allocations, transfers & exchanges
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Due to raised levels of carbon dioxide in her home, Mrs C was decanted to a new permanent home by the housing association. She complained to us that the association failed to manage her decant in line with their policy and that they failed to communicate with her in an appropriate manner throughout the process. In particular, Mrs C was unhappy because she did not feel that she was given enough money to buy or replace what she already had in her previous home. She said that she was told by the association that her new property would be finished to the same standard as her previous home, but that this had not been the case. Mrs C said she also received conflicting information from the association in relation to what they would pay for and what she would be expected to pay for. She described staff attitude and communication as being poor throughout.

The association told us that, at an early stage of the carbon dioxide incident arising, they identified that they did not have a policy on decant and home loss allowances which covered an incident the scale of that experienced by Mrs C. They took steps to put one in place and confirmed that they took guidance for the amounts to offer for home loss and furnishings from Shelter (a charity which offers advice and advocacy regarding poor housing) and other housing associations. The association also explained that a number of alterations were carried out in Mrs C's new home, all to her specification. In addition, Mrs C received the appropriate home loss payment and she also received additional payments for replacing her floor coverings and curtains. The amounts Mrs C received were in line with the allowances set out in the association's decant policy. As such, we did not uphold Mrs C's complaint that the association failed to manage her decant in line with their policy.

In relation to Mrs C's concerns about the association's communication with her, we did not identify any evidence to suggest she was given conflicting information in relation to what the association would pay for and what she would be expected to pay for. The information available confirmed that payments were made to Mrs C in line with the allowances set by the policy. We also saw evidence that staff had taken reasonable steps to keep in contact with Mrs C throughout the process. In light of the evidence available, we did not uphold Mrs C's complaint about the association's communication with her throughout the process.