

SPSO decision report

Case: 201608934, The Moray Council
Sector: local government
Subject: complaints handling (inc social work complaints procedures)
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C, who is an advocacy and support worker, complained on behalf of her client (Ms A). When Ms A moved between local authority areas she was unhappy about aspects of how her new council had handled that transition. Complaints were raised on her behalf about this, and these were eventually determined by a social work complaints review committee (CRC). The CRC made recommendations that the council accepted. However, Ms A was unhappy with how the council had handled her complaints and the actions they took to carry out the recommendations of the CRC. Ms C brought these complaints to us.

We found that the council had not responded to a significant complaint that had been raised on Ms A's behalf and had not carried out the recommendations of the CRC in a reasonable way, or in the way they had told Ms A that they would. We found that they had not considered Ms A's situation at a specific meeting when they said they would, and that they did not inform Ms A that her case was not discussed at the meeting. In light of this, we upheld Ms C's complaints.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Provide Ms A with an apology for:
- her poor experience during her initial transition of local authorities
- their failure to provide her with an apology for her poor experience in their previous apology letter
- not promptly alerting her and apologising to her that her case was not considered at a specific meeting where they said it would be discussed.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- The council should undertake a meaningful review of their processes for clients transitioning from other local authorities, supported at corporate level.
- The council should re-issue guidance in relation to communication and a person-centred approach towards transitions from one local authority area to another.

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.