

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201703103, Dumfries and Galloway Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** child services and family support  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C, who works for an advocacy and support agency, complained on behalf of her client (Miss A) who felt that she had been financially disadvantaged by delays in the council completing a kinship carer assessment. Miss A was undergoing assessment to be a kinship carer but was looking after the children while the assessment was ongoing. Miss A received payments from the council but believed some of these were calculated incorrectly. Specifically, she felt that one-off payments made prior to the referral for kinship care being made should not have been included in the calculation of financial support. The council acknowledged that there had been delays in the completing of the kinship care assessment but did not feel that Miss A had been financially disadvantaged during the process. Miss A was unhappy with this response and brought her complaint to us.

We took independent advice from a social worker. We found that the council was correct to include some of the one-off payments when calculating the financial support. However, we noted that the kinship assessment was delayed by a number of weeks. This meant that Miss A did not receive her kinship carer allowance as early as she would have if the assessment was completed on time. Therefore, we considered that Miss A had been financially disadvantaged due to the council's delay and upheld Mrs C's complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Pay Miss A the outstanding amount caused by the delay in completing a kinship care assessment.

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

- The council should amend their kinship care policy to clearly reflect the legislation.

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.