

SPSO decision report



Case: 202406182, Berwickshire Housing Association Ltd
Sector: Housing Associations
Subject: Repairs and maintenance
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained to us that the housing association unreasonably failed to investigate and repair defects in relation to the doors, windows and the heating system in their home. We found that that the length of time C waited for replacement radiators, repairs to the windows and a replacement door was unacceptable. The housing association did not carry out the repairs within a reasonable period of them becoming aware that they were needed. We therefore upheld this aspect of C's complaint.

C also complained that the housing association failed to communicate reasonably with them regarding the repairs. We found several examples of C requesting a call back, of long intervals between receiving a response and of C having to chase a response, over the 14 month period we considered. Many of these occurred after the housing association's initial response to their complaint and promise of improvements. We therefore also upheld this aspect of C's complaint. We also identified some failures in the handling of C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the specific failings identified in respect of the complaints. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/meaningful-apologies.

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

- The association should communicate effectively with customers and ensure that calls are returned or emails responded to within a reasonable timeframe.
- The Housing Association should carry out repairs within a reasonable period of time of becoming aware that they are needed.