

SPSO decision report

Case: 202506324, Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership
Sector: Health and Social Care
Subject: Policy / administration
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about a budget proposal by the partnership to remove in house care at one of four Housing with Care complexes and replace it with a mobile home care service. Carers would visit up to four times a day, based on assessed need. Before the Integration Joint Board (IJB) made its budget decision, the partnership carried out a consultation and an equalities and poverty impact assessment (EPIA). After the decision, an options appraisal was used to select which complex would be reprovioned.

C argued that the consultation failed to involve service users, the EPIA wrongly assumed the new service would match existing provision - overlooking impacts on older and disabled residents - and the options appraisal did not explain why their complex was chosen.

The partnership accepted that consultation with service users had been inadequate and carried out a lessons learned review to improve future engagement. However, they maintained that home care support would meet assessed needs, that additional informal support from in house staff could not be quantified, and that therefore the EPIA's neutral impact finding was reasonable. They explained that the options appraisal lacked detail because it was not meant for public use, though professionals had considered each criteria fully before approval.

We found that the consultation and EPIA were insufficient, undermining the IJB's decision making process and upheld C's complaint. We appreciated the lessons learned review which had already been undertaken by the partnership and the recommendations made.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failings identified above. 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 IJB are aware of our findings.

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.