

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201405881, The City of Edinburgh Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** statutory notices  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C owned a property in Edinburgh. In 2007 the council issued a statutory notice requiring repairs to a rooftop drying green shared by several properties. The property owners did not appoint a contractor of their own and the council took over responsibility for the works. The owners were provided with an initial estimate of the cost of the works. However, once the work had started, this escalated substantially. Ms C raised a number of concerns about the lack of information as to why the price had changed so much, the council's failure to explain their minimum charges and additional work carried out at extra cost without consultation with the owners.

We were critical of the council's handling of the sizeable cost increase. Whilst there was no suggestion that the work was unnecessary, we found that they could have provided a more realistic estimate at the beginning of the process to better manage the owners' expectations. We were not concerned by their communication of the minimum charges and were generally satisfied that the additional works were added to the project reasonably. However, we commented on the way that these works were communicated to the owners.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise to Ms C for their poor communication throughout the repairs project;
- consider how they may better research the likely cost of repairs when issuing their initial estimates; and
- pay Ms C the sum of £250 in acknowledgement of the time and trouble she had to go to to obtain clarification of the works being carried out and their associated costs.