

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 201906799, Osprey Housing  
**Sector:** Housing Associations  
**Subject:** Rent and/or service charges  
**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

C complained about the actions of their housing association. C had moved from one association property to another nearby. Some months after the move, C was presented with a bill for repairs. C disputed both the need for the repairs and the cost which they considered excessive. C also said they had been overcharged rent, by four days, without adequate explanation and that their complaint had been mishandled by the association.

We found the damage had been recorded by the association following a void inspection. While it was not the SPSO's role to assess the extent of the damage, the inspection had been carried out in line with the association's procedures, and they were able to provide evidence showing the damage had been recorded immediately after the vacation of the property, in line with its published procedures. We did not uphold this aspect of C's complaint.

C noted the association had agreed to collect the keys from them, but had failed to do so. This had resulted in a four-day delay but C had not been notified this would result in additional rent charges. C noted they had moved out of the property on the day agreed and the only available paperwork supported their positions. The association accepted that they had agreed to collect the keys from C and that they could not provide evidence to show what had been agreed in this respect. They would, therefore, adjust the rent account by the days in dispute. We upheld this aspect of C's complaint.

We found the handling of C's complaint was inadequate. The association had not agreed the complaint with C or discussed it with them. As a result their response had not addressed all the issues C had raised nor obtained all relevant evidence from them. We upheld this complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failure to follow their procedures, the delay in informing them of the void inspection's findings and for failing to follow their complaints procedure properly. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets](http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets)
- Confirm to C in writing when their rent account has been adjusted.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Staff dealing with complaints should be familiar with the Model Complaints Handling Procedure, understanding the importance of communication and the need to demonstrate thorough investigation of the points raised.

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.