

SPSO decision report

Case: 202201541, South Ayrshire Council
Sector: Local Government
Subject: Adoption / Fostering
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained on behalf of their relative (A) and A's child (B) about the health and social care partnership, of which the council administered the complaint investigation. B was removed from A's care. Following a short period of kinship care by B's grandparent, they were placed with foster carers. C and their partner applied to be B's kinship carers as soon as B was taken into care. However, they were not made B's kinship carers until several years later.

C complained that the partnership had unreasonably delayed in assessing their kinship care application. C also complained that there had been failures to facilitate B's contact with their family, to address concerns about B's foster carers, to provide them with support following B's kinship care placement and to provide specified information. The partnership accepted that there had been delay in assessing B's kinship care and identified learning from this. They did not identify any other service failures.

We took independent advice from a social work adviser. We found that there had been a failure to progress the kinship care placement timeously and to take reasonable steps to facilitate B's family contacts. We also found that there had been a failure to provide specified information. We upheld these complaints. However, we found that there had not been a failure to address concerns about B's foster carers or to provide C with support following B's kinship care placement. We did not uphold these complaints.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C and their family for the failings identified. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at <http://www.spsso.org.uk/meaningful-apologies>.
- Provide C with an explanation on why there had been undue delays in completing B's kinship care assessment and/or information about the findings/recommendations and actions taken from the CSWO review.

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.