

SPSO decision report

Case: 202204206, Fife Council
Sector: Local Government
Subject: Repairs and maintenance
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about their housing. C had moved into the property because they were downsizing from their previous home. The property they moved into had been purchased by the council from its owner as part of a 'buy back' scheme for council properties. C complained of persistent damp and mould within the property that was causing them significant health problems. C was offered alternative properties by the council but C rejected them on the basis that they were unsuitable.

We found that extensive works had been carried out to the property prior to C moving in. We also found that, whilst C disputed the suitability of the alternative properties they were offered, the council had followed the correct procedure in assessing C's medical needs and the properties offered to C. Therefore, we did not uphold these parts of C's complaint.

In relation to C's reports of damp and mould, we found that these issues were investigated. However, the council took an unreasonable length of time to respond, given that they were aware of the health issues being experienced by the family. Therefore, we upheld this part of C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failure to respond timeously to their concerns. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

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

- The council should have effective systems in place to ensure that problems with mould and damp are responded to timeously.

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.