

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 202301503, Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership  
**Sector:** Health and Social Care  
**Subject:** Child services and family support  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

C complained about the service provided in respect of their grandchild (A). C complained that A was not being provided with a stable home environment by their parent (B). C was concerned about the condition of B's home and whether A and their siblings were being adequately supervised and kept safe. C also expressed concerns over other adults in B's home.

C said that the partnership did not take their concerns seriously and had failed to ensure A's health and wellbeing. This included whether sufficient home visits took place, and the decision not to initiate child protection proceedings, or make a referral to the Scottish Children's Reporter (SCRA). C also raised concerns about social work documentation and processes relating to Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD) and Child's Plans.

We took independent advice from a social worker. We found that the partnership's explanations and assurances to C, with respect to the number and nature of home visits, did not match the available records and that there had been a failure to carry out robust and timely assessments of B's home. Where home visits did take place, there was a lack of evidence that key concerns related to the condition of specific areas of the home were addressed. Regarding the referral to the SCRA, we found that while the IRD stated that ongoing assessment would determine if a SCRA referral was required, there was no indication of the parameters of the ongoing assessment or what timescales were in place. Furthermore, the IRD did not state by whom, or by when, actions should be completed and lacked clarity regarding roles and responsibilities. Similarly, the Child's Plan lacked clarity and contained significant omissions. Therefore, we upheld C's complaints.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for these failings. 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).

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

- The partnership should ensure that where they have involvement in relation to concerns raised about the welfare of a child, that relevant documentation is completed and monitored to a reasonable standard.
- Where concerns are raised about the wellbeing of a child, reasonable, timely and robust action should be taken to assess and investigate the situation.

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.