

The Ombudsman's final decision

Summary: Mr X complains that the Council incorrectly sent him a council tax summons. We will not investigate this complaint because the Council has remedied the matter.

The complaint

1. Mr X complains that the Council incorrectly sent him a council tax summons.

The Ombudsman's role and powers

2. We investigate complaints about 'maladministration' and 'service failure'. In this statement, I have used the word 'fault' to refer to these. We provide a free service, but must use public money carefully. We may decide not to start or continue with an investigation if we are satisfied with the actions a council has taken or proposes to take. (*Local Government Act 1974, section 24A(7), as amended*)

How I considered this complaint

3. I considered information provided by the complainant and the Council.
4. I considered the Ombudsman's Assessment Code.
5. The complainant has commented on my draft decision.

My assessment

6. The Council sent a council tax bill and summons to a property Mr X owns despite being aware that his address for such correspondence was different.
7. Mr X says that the letter was addressed to his wife who died six years ago and this caused him distress.
8. The Council apologised and altered their records to ensure that this error did not reoccur. They have waived all costs relating to the summons.
9. Mr X wants compensation from the Council.
10. Whilst the correspondence would have been upsetting for Mr X we are not persuaded that the Council need do more than the apology they have already given, the correction of the records and the waiving of the costs.

Final decision

11. I do not intend to investigate this complaint because the Council has remedied the matter to the Ombudsman's satisfaction.

Investigator's decision on behalf of the Ombudsman