

10 August 2018

Complaint reference:
18 005 179

Complaint against:
London Borough of Havering

The Ombudsman's final decision

Summary: we cannot investigate Mr X's complaint about the Council's handling of a recurring rat infestation which, he says, is coming from a council property next door. This is because we have no jurisdiction to consider council housing management issues.

The complaint

1. The complainant, who I have called Mr X, complained that the London Borough of Havering is not doing enough to stop a recurring rat infestation in his loft. He said the rats were coming from a neighbouring council house.

The Ombudsman's role and powers

2. The Local Government Act 1974 sets out our powers but also imposes restrictions on what we can investigate.
3. We cannot investigate complaints about the provision or management of social housing by a council acting as a registered social housing provider. (*Local Government Act 1974, paragraph 5A schedule 5, as amended*)

How I considered this complaint

4. I have considered the information provided by Mr X and the Council.

What I found

Key facts

5. Mr X complained to the Council's Environmental Health Department about a recurring rat infestation in his loft. He thought it was coming from a neighbouring property. Environmental Health passed the matter to the Council's Housing Management Team as the neighbouring property was a council house. The Housing Management Team arranged for Mr X's property and the Council house next door to have their drains inspected and for a pest control company to put down bait.
6. Mr X said the rat infestation is a recurring problem and he is unhappy the Council will not take more action to prevent this.

Analysis

7. The Council is a social housing provider and the matters Mr X complained of are housing management issues. So we have no jurisdiction to investigate Mr X's complaint and cannot do so.

Final decision

8. We cannot investigate Mr X's complaint because it is outside our jurisdiction.

Investigator's decision on behalf of the Ombudsman