

3 May 2018

Your ref:

Our ref: 17 014 178

(Please quote our reference when contacting us and, if using email, put the number in the email subject line)

Thank you for your complaint against London Borough of Havering. We have allocated your complaint reference number 17 014 178. Please quote this number whenever you contact us.

As you are aware, the law says that, before investigating a complaint, we must normally be satisfied the Council knows about the complaint and has had an opportunity to investigate and to reply. All local authorities and many other bodies use their own complaints procedures, which may be different for certain types of complaint. The Council will be able to tell you more about these procedures.

Usually we expect people to have exhausted complaints procedures before we consider whether to investigate their complaint. This is because the Council is best placed to resolve things that have gone wrong. From the information I have, although you have tried to progress your complaint, it has not been right through the Council's complaints procedure.

From my enquiries of the Council, it has acknowledged that it has not responded to your email of 16 March 2018, for which it apologises.

I will therefore send a copy of your complaint to the Council today. I will ask it to put the complaint through the correct procedures or to respond to your complaint in a different way if that is more suitable. I will also ask the Council to ensure it that it keeps you informed about what is happening.

### **Your complaint**

From your original telephone discussion with our adviser, your complaint has been recorded as:

Miss says her mother has recently passed away, and her estate, which includes a privately owned house and separate garage, is currently going through probate. Miss discovered on 01/11/17 that the council had accessed the garage, removed all the property inside and replaced the door.

Miss says she has had acknowledgements regarding her complaint, and holding letters inviting her to a meeting with the council that she attended on 02/02/18, but she has never had any formal response in writing to her complaint.

You say that the injustice this has caused you is:

Miss says she is spending a lot of time and trouble dealing with this and it is causing a lot of stress to her. She says the garage was used as family storage and a lot of things in the garage were sentimental and irreplaceable.

There is still a dispute over the ownership of the garage.

and the outcome you seek is:

Miss says she would like the council to accept that her mother owned the garage. She says she would like the council to get her stuff back, but if that is not possible, she would like some compensation not only for the missing possessions but also the stress and emotional upset they have caused. Miss would like an apology over how they have handled the matter.

This is what I will send to the Council as your complaint. If it is incorrect, please let the Council know.

### **Next steps**

When the Council tells you it has completed considering your complaint, if you are not happy with its response or the way it has dealt with you, please telephone us on 0300 061 0614. Tell our adviser that you have had this letter and quote our reference number 17 014 178. It would help if you have with you the Council's response to your complaint when you call, as our adviser will ask you some questions about what the letter or email says.

We will then consider whether your complaint is one we should investigate, and can look at any delays in the Council's process at the same time.

