

SPSO NEWS

19 July 2017

This e-newsletter highlights:

- recommendations to health boards that demonstrate our new, value adding, approach
- social work, NHS and complaints network updates from the Complaint Standards Authority
- our next training courses
- news from our Scottish Welfare team.

As well as full investigations into four NHS complaints, we are publishing 42 reports of complaints we investigated about a range of sectors including local authorities, health, higher and further education, the prison service and water authorities. These are available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/our-findings>.

Recommendations to health boards

As we highlighted last month, we have changed our approach to making recommendations, with a stronger focus on achieving better outcomes in relation to services as well maintaining our commitment to achieve positive outcomes for individuals. Our aim is to support organisations in preventing repeat occurrences.

An example of this changed approach is from an investigation where we found failings in the care of a man who was treated as a minor head injury and later found to have suffered a brain haemorrhage ([201507500](#)). In relation to nursing care, we recommended that the board ensure that nursing staff caring for patients who have suffered a brain injury, and for patients with challenging behaviour, receive appropriate learning and development and that mechanisms exist to ensure this is kept up-to-date. We said that we require documentary evidence that these training needs are being met, or planned (with definitive timescales, not simply a broad intention).

In another complaint about failings in the care of a man who had to have a leg amputation ([201601215](#)), one of our recommendations was that the board ensure it has in place an effective referral pathway which has a failsafe, so that urgent appointments are arranged when needed. In a complaint about the management of a woman's pregnancy ([201602616](#)), we said staff should be competent and confident in interpreting CTGs, taking into account the clinical background of the case. The final full investigation we are publishing today is about the care and treatment of a man whose back pain was later found to be terminal cancer ([201601493](#)). We upheld the complaint, and made two recommendations.

We began to change how we make recommendations in April this year, and are grateful to the organisations and other customers who gave us feedback before we did so. We expect our approach to evolve, and would encourage complainants and organisations to continue to give us your views on these changes. Please give feedback on the new approach via our Learning and Improvement team at liu@spsso.gsi.gov.uk.

Complaints Standards Authority (CSA)

We provide an [update](#) on compliance with the social work and NHS model complaints handling procedures, and information for Integration Joint Boards. We also provide information about complaints handlers' network meetings in the local authority, college, housing and university sectors.

Investigation skills training

We are holding open courses in complaint investigation skills in Edinburgh on 5 September and 28 November 2017. Please see our Valuing Complaints website for [further details and booking information](#).

Scottish Welfare Fund

Our SWF [annual report is available on our website](#) along with [annual letters](#) for individual councils and [annual statistics for 2016-17](#).

In June, we responded to 71 enquiries and made 57 decisions (25 crisis grants and 32 community care grants). The highest number of enquiries was received from applicants living in Glasgow, Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire. This month's [casework examples](#) are about councils' assessment of qualifying criteria.

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