

**Case:** 201100825, Tayside NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** nurses; nursing care  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C's mother (Mrs A) required ankle replacement surgery. Around one week after her surgery, Mrs A was discharged home. Mr C complained that his mother was not properly cared for by the district nursing service to the extent that her ankle became severely infected, and she was disorientated and malnourished. Mr C said that when Mrs A was admitted to Ninewells Hospital around three weeks later, her condition was life-threatening.

Mr C said that the infection in his mother's ankle had also spread to her spine but that despite her pain and the concerns expressed by her family, it took a month to determine and treat the extent of the problem.

We investigated Mr C's complaint and obtained advice from our medical adviser. The adviser found that the care and treatment given to Mr C's mother was satisfactory and that hospital staff had correctly concentrated on the severity of Mrs A's infection before addressing the pain in her back.

Although Mr C's complaints about his mother's care and treatment were not upheld, we did uphold his complaint about the board's complaints handling. We found that the board took too long to handle and investigate Mr C's complaint and that they did not comply with their own stated timescales.

### Recommendation

We recommended that the board:

- remind all staff involved in this complaint (particularly those who have been asked to respond to the complaints department) of their responsibility to support the NHS complaints procedure by replying in a timely way.