

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201300756, Grampian NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** admission, discharge & transfer procedures  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C, who has type 1 diabetes, complained that he was not offered a meal over a period of several hours while waiting to leave hospital. He did say that a nurse had offered him something, which he had declined. The board said that the staff nurse recalled a nurse offering food three times, although Mr C said this was not true. Our investigation found that Mr C had been in hospital overnight in relation to a condition other than his diabetes, and nursing staff were satisfied he knew how to manage the diabetes himself. He was administering his insulin himself while in the hospital. This meant that his food intake did not need to be recorded, which also meant we were unable to establish whether he was offered something to eat at a suitable time. There were, therefore, no grounds to uphold this part of Mr C's complaint.

Mr C also complained that the patient discharge sheet referred to him as female. When he complained to the board, they apologised, explained that this had been human error and told him what action they were taking to help prevent a recurrence. We also noted that the writer of the discharge sheet had referred to Mr C as 'Mr' on the following line, which was an indication that the gender error had been a human error, rather than a deliberate attempt to humiliate Mr C. We also considered the board's explanations and actions were reasonable.

Mr C was also unhappy with the board's complaints handling, which he said took too long and did not address the issues. We found that the board had taken the complaint seriously, investigated the various issues robustly and tried hard to respond to the key issues raised and many of Mr C's other points. There were delays, but we also noted that the NHS complaints procedure only gives timescale guidelines in respect of the first complaint reply, not in respect of follow-up correspondence, such as Mr C's follow-up letter. We took the view that the board should have kept in contact with Mr C about the delays but did not consider it would be proportionate to make any recommendation for action by the board as, on balance, their complaints handling was generally good.