

SPSO decision report

Case: 201302499, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality
Outcome: some upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C, who is a prisoner, complained about the late supply of medication by the health centre based within the prison. He was also unhappy with the way in which his complaint was handled, saying that he had difficulties obtaining a complaints form and that health centre staff had opened his mail.

We did not uphold the complaint about the supply of medication. The board explained that the external pharmacy had delayed in providing the medication to the health centre. Our investigation also found that there was a national shortage of this medication around that time, which was outwith the board's control. We took independent advice from one of our medical advisers who took the view that, although Mr C might possibly have experienced some pain, the delay would not have had a negative impact on his medical condition. We also took into account a recent recommendation we made to the board about previous delays in the supply of Mr C's medication.

We upheld Mr C's complaint about complaints handling, as we found that the board failed to provide him with a complaints form in a timely manner. However, we did not make any specific recommendations, as we recently recommended that the board take relevant action on another similar complaint. The board acknowledged that Mr C's mail should not have been opened, and we were satisfied with the action they took to ensure it did not happen again.