

SPSO decision report

Case: 201302673, Fife NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: communication, staff attitude, dignity, confidentiality
Outcome: upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained to the board about a possible breach of confidentiality caused by automated messages which had been left on the family's landline phone. Ms C heard no more until the board sent her a formal response to her complaint some six months later. The response explained that the automated service had been suspended until new procedures could be installed to prevent possible breaches of confidentiality.

Our investigation found that the board had treated Ms C's complaint as a return complaint rather than a new one, and that the delayed response was compounded by a period of high numbers of staff absences. We upheld the complaint but made no recommendations as the board had recently formally apologised to Ms C and provided detailed explanation of the action taken to prevent a repeat occurrence.