

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201304522, Lothian NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about the care given to her husband (Mr C) during two admissions to St John's Hospital. In particular, she was unhappy with the content of the discharge letters and complained that the content of these had adversely influenced her husband's treatment. She was also unhappy with the board's handling of her complaints about this.

As part of our investigation, we obtained independent advice from one of our advisers, who is a consultant physician in acute internal medicine. After taking this advice we found no evidence that Mr C had not received appropriate care during the admissions and that there was no evidence that his treatment was in any way influenced by the discharge letters. Our adviser said that the discharge letters were medically appropriate, and that Mr C had been thoroughly examined, investigated and diagnosed before each discharge. The decisions to discharge him were also reasonable and appropriate.

The board accepted that, while they had responded to Mrs C's initial complaint in line with their complaints procedure, they had not met their time standards in responding to her second complaint, and they apologised for this. We also found that although, in response to Mrs C's continuing concerns, they had obtained a second opinion about Mr C's clinical care, they had failed to address all the issues she raised in her complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- remind staff of the need to adhere to the timescale for responding under the NHS complaints procedure; and
- ensure that complaint responses address the issues raised in a complaint.
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