

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201508126, Lothian NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C was referred to the sleep clinic at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. She attended on a number of occasions over the following four years but her symptoms did not improve. She said that a consultant physician contacted her clinical psychologist but provided inaccurate and misleading information which detrimentally affected her future treatment. Ms C also complained about the way the board responded to her complaint.

We took independent advice from a consultant respiratory and general physician. We found that while Ms C's consultant physician provided her professional opinion to other health professionals, she did not provide incorrect or misleading information. We therefore did not uphold this aspect of Ms C's complaint. We noted, however, that the information could have been written more sympathetically and that the board had already spoken to the consultant physician about this. We also found that after Ms C complained, the board took too long to reply to her and their letter provided little explanation. We therefore upheld this aspect of Ms C's complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- emphasise to staff the necessity of providing reasoned responses to complaints made; and
- emphasise to staff the necessity of replying to complaints within the time-frames specified.