

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201601930, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that the board failed to provide the results of a scan that he underwent at the Western General Hospital. He said that his GP had not been given the results of the scan, and that when he called the board he was given results over the phone by a secretary who had not been able to explain the results in full. He also complained about the board's handling of his complaint.

We took independent advice from a hospital consultant. We found that it was the responsibility of the consultant who ordered the scan to report the results back to Mr C, and that this was not done. Whilst there was some limited evidence that the consultant had notified the GP of the results, there was no evidence of what form this notification took. We found that when the results were viewed by the requesting consultant, a letter should have been sent to both Mr C and his GP. We therefore upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

In addition, we found that the board's response to Mr C's complaint contained several inaccuracies and upheld Mr C's complaint in this regard.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- ensure that this case is brought to the consultant's attention at their next annual appraisal for them to reflect on;
- reflect on this case and consider whether this was an isolated error or whether steps should be taken to ensure scan results are being communicated to patients in a timely manner;
- bring the findings of this investigation regarding the communication of test results to the relevant secretarial staff's attention;
- apologise for the failings identified with regards to their complaints response; and
- remind complaints handling staff of the necessity of providing factually accurate and non-contradictory responses.