

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201602354, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division

**Sector:** health

**Subject:** nurses / nursing care

**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C attended A&E at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh on two occasions. The first occasion was for constipation and increasing back pain. Mr C's second attendance was due to concern that he may have deep vein thrombosis (a blood clot in a vein).

Mr C complained that when he attended A&E, the board failed to provide him with reasonable nursing and medical care. He also complained about the way the board dealt with his complaint. In reply, the board said that Mr C had been treated in accordance with his symptoms and with national and local guidance. However, they apologised to Mr C for the delay in responding to his complaint.

We took independent nursing and emergency medicine advice. We found that on his first attendance, Mr C was examined in a reasonable way and had been checked for any symptoms requiring urgent admission or imaging. None were present. We found that on his second attendance, the doctor failed to conduct a Wells test (a test to ascertain the risk of blood clot) and that the neurological examination of Mr C's lower limbs was not thorough or to a high standard. In light of these failings, we upheld the complaint and recommended that the board issue an apology to Mr C.

Although the board had taken steps to address Mr C's complaint, they took 120 days to reply. The board's timeframe for responding to complaints is 20 days. We therefore upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise to Mr C for the delay in dealing with his complaint;
- emphasise to staff involved the necessity of adhering to timescales in line with the complaints policy; and
- apologise to Mr C for the failure to conduct a Wells test and carry out a thorough neurological examination of Mr C's lower limbs.