

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201703145, Tayside NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C, who works for an advocacy and support agency, complained on behalf of her client (Mrs B) about the communication with Mrs B's husband (Mr A). Mr A suffered some stroke like symptoms and his GP referred him to the hospital for a scan to check if he had had a stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA or 'mini-stroke'). A doctor discussed the results of the scan with Mr A in an appointment at the TIA clinic, about two weeks after his initial symptoms. It was recorded that Mr A was at risk of a further stroke, and the doctor recommended that he take medication to reduce this. Mr A suffered a further stroke some months after this, and later died. Mrs B said that Mr A never told her about the results of the scan, and she queried whether he had fully understood this, given he was suffering from confusion. Mrs B felt it was unreasonable for the doctor to share this information with Mr A at an appointment he attended alone, and not with her.

We took independent advice from a consultant in general medicine and medicine for the elderly. We found that Mr A's confusion was temporary and that there was nothing in the records to suggest he was not able to understand the information given or that he needed support during the appointment. We did not uphold Mrs C's complaint. We noted that the board had said that they had learned from the complaint and that they were changing the appointment letters for this clinic to suggest that patients may wish to bring someone with them.