

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201704651, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained about the care provided to his wife (Mrs A) when she attended A&E at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. Mrs A presented to the department with severe pain in her shoulder. Shortly after admission Mrs A was given morphine for her pain and was assessed by an emergency medicine consultant.

Mr C raised concern about the delay in triage (a process in which things are ranked in terms of importance or priority), inadequate pain management, and the failure to use a cubicle. The board acknowledged that Mrs A should have been moved to a cubicle after morphine was given and apologised for this. We took independent advice from an emergency medicine adviser. We found the care provided to be reasonable, however, the failure to use a cubicle may have impacted on Mrs A's dignity. We upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint. As the board had apologised for this failing and taken adequate steps to address this issue, we did not make any further recommendations.

Mr C also raised concern about a letter sent to Mrs A's GP in relation to the admission. We found that the letter contained an inaccuracy and upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Finally, Mr C complained that the board failed to investigate his complaint reasonably. We noted that many aspects of the complaint handling were reasonable, however, we found that the board had not investigated his complaints about hygiene. Therefore, we upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mr C and Mrs A for the inaccuracy within the letter documenting the admission and for failing to investigate part of Mr C's complaint. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance](http://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance).