

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201304829, Lothian NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

After losing a lot of weight, Mr C was referred for plastic surgery to remove excess skin around his abdomen (abdominoplasty). He had a psychological assessment and was told he would have one procedure. After the surgery at St John's Hospital he reported discomfort and problems and felt that the surgery had created other problems with the appearance of his skin. He had additional 'revision' surgery to correct some of the problems caused by the initial operation. However, he complained the surgery was not successful and he was still suffering from side effects. He was unhappy that the board were no longer willing to offer him further plastic surgery.

We took independent advice from our plastic surgery adviser, who said that Mr C's surgery appeared to have been successful. The second operation had been carried out to tidy up elements of the initial surgery, and would be considered part of the same procedure. He pointed out that before an abdominoplasty it was often difficult to be sure whether one procedure would be sufficient. He also said, however, that if the board had a reason for turning down Mr C's request for further surgery, they should have explained this clearly to him.

We found that while there did not appear to be any problems with the surgery itself, Mr C was not being offered further treatment and had not had a full explanation of why this was. We upheld his complaint and made a recommendation.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- review the potential need for further surgery and ensure this is fully discussed with Mr C. Following this, if Mr C requests an independent second opinion the board should make the appropriate arrangements for this.