

SPSO decision report



Case: 201901747, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the change in the way his medication was administered at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. In the past, Mr C received IV morphine (injection into a vein) but had now been changed to subcutaneous morphine (injection under the skin). Mr C believed that the change meant he was in pain for a longer period of time and that it was not as effective. He believed that the decision to change the method of administration of the morphine was unreasonable.

We took independent medical advice from a clinician and found that the board had implemented a new Recurring Pain Pathway which included guidance in appropriate cases that morphine should be given subcutaneously (under the skin). This would have the effect of a slower absorption with fewer side effects. We also found that the board staff had explained the rationale for the change to Mr C in a sensitive manner taking into account his other health issues. We did not uphold the complaint.