

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 201902491, Tayside NHS Board  
**Sector:** Health  
**Subject:** Communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

C, a support and advocacy worker, complained on behalf of their client (A). A is profoundly deaf and British Sign Language (BSL) is their first language, and so A relies upon BSL interpreters when attending medical appointments. A requested a gender specific interpreter for a GP appointment but when they arrived they found that the interpreter was not the gender they had requested. The interpreter had to leave the room when A required an intimate examination and they were unable to communicate with their GP during this time. C said A felt that they had not been treated with respect and dignity.

We found that A did not receive the level of service they could reasonably expect from the board which led to difficulties in accessing general practice services and significant distress. The failings in the service provided included an unreasonable delay in the provision of an interpreter, misleading information about the status of interpreters, lack of a gender specific interpreter, and an inadequate risk assessment. We upheld the complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to A for the failings identified in this investigation. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/informationleaflets](http://www.spsso.org.uk/informationleaflets).

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Ensure that the level of service provided meets the requirements of patients with additional needs to enable them to fully access all services within a healthcare setting.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.