

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 202005961, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division  
**Sector:** Health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

C complained on behalf of their late partner (A) about the care and treatment they received at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh for heart disease. A's condition deteriorated and they were transferred to the intensive care unit and then ultimately referred to another health board for a heart transplant. A died five days later.

C said that the board did not treat the left side of A's heart which resulted in a grave outcome for A. C also said that the board did not notice that A was deteriorating and that A should have been transferred to the other health board earlier.

The board said that when A was admitted they had a blocked right coronary artery and treatment was given for this. They explained that there was no viability in the left side of A's heart (due to damage caused by a previous heart attack) and therefore, to treat that side would have subjected A to additional risk. The board said that A was very unwell, but reasonably stable until their sudden deterioration. They said that there was no indication that an earlier referral outwith the health board was warranted or would have altered the outcome.

We took independent clinical advice from a consultant cardiologist (a doctor that that deals with diseases and abnormalities of the heart). We found that it was reasonable for the board not to have a treatment plan for the left side of A's heart as it would have exposed A to increased risk and there would have been no benefit to A (due to irreversible damage caused by a previous heart attack). The board reasonably monitored A's condition and provided appropriate care and treatment in response to their deteriorating condition. We also found that the board's decision to refer A to another health board was reasonable and that there was no indication this should have been done earlier.

As such, we did not uphold this complaint. We did, however, provide feedback to the board regarding their communication with A.