

SPSO decision report

Case: 201105188, Lothian NHS Board - University Hospitals Division
Sector: health
Subject: communication, staff attitude, dignity, confidentiality
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C attends hospital regularly for treatment. On one of those occasions a member of staff handed him an envelope containing letters that Mr C had given another member of staff to read. The envelope was addressed to Mr C but it was open. Mr C was concerned because the letters contained personal information about him. He complained to the board but was dissatisfied with their response and complained to us.

When we investigated, the board said they had asked staff about this after Mr C complained but no-one could remember anything about the envelope and there was nothing documented in his file. There was no further information or evidence available, and in the absence of such evidence we could not uphold the complaint as we could not say for certain whether or not the envelope was open when it was left for Mr C.