

SPSO decision report

Case: 202208600, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained about the care and treatment that they received from the board prior to and during the birth of their child (A). C complained that the midwives were dismissive of their pain levels during labour, failed to properly assess their condition, was wrongly sent home to allow labour to progress, and that staff denied their requests for an epidural. C also complained about the poor communication from the clinical team when they were in theatre for a caesarean section.

The board said that they considered the decision to send C home was made in line with current guidelines but apologised if the reasons for the decision were not communicated at the time. The board explained that C's request for an epidural was not actioned as labour was progressing rapidly and consideration was being given as to whether an emergency caesarean section was required.

We took independent advice from a midwifery specialist. We found that the midwifery care provided to C was reasonable. We noted that the board apologised for some shortcomings in the care provided and that this was a reasonable response. Overall, we were satisfied that the decisions taken by the midwives were based on a reasonable assessment of C's presenting condition. In respect of the medical care provided during the birth, we acknowledged that there may have been a lack of clarity around the consent process, however, overall, we did not find any significant shortcomings in the clinical care and treatment provided to C. We did not uphold C's complaints.