

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 202311694, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division

**Sector:** Health

**Subject:** Clinical treatment / diagnosis

**Decision:** some upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

C complained about the board's decision not to provide thyroid chondroplasty (a surgery to reduce the size of the Adam's apple) as part of their gender affirming treatment. The board explained that though they used to have surgeons who could carry out this surgery, they no longer do. They said that the Scottish Government does not fund thyroid chondroplasty and therefore they cannot recruit surgeons for the purpose of performing the surgery and are prevented from using public finances to fund it.

We found that there is no obligation for the board to provide thyroid chondroplasty on the basis of Scottish Government protocols. However, protocols state that health boards should ensure they have clear documentation on what is available to their patients and have local policies in place regarding access to them. We gave feedback to the board on this point, but ultimately did not uphold C's complaint.

C also complained that when they were in the process of having hair removal prior to gender reassignment surgery, the board stopped providing this service. Because hair removal at the site of surgery is a requirement, C had to pay for the hair removal to be completed privately.

During the course of our investigation, the board accepted that they had not been clear to them at the point of C's complaint that it is the responsibility of the health board where the patient lives to arrange hair removal prior to gender reassignment surgery. The board apologised for the failure and financial inconvenience caused and offered to reimburse C for the laser hair removal. We upheld the complaint and made no further recommendations.