

## INWO decision report

**Case:** 202408622, Lothian NHS Board  
**Subject:** Patient safety  
**Decision:** Resolved (discontinued)



### Summary

C raised concerns in relation to the Board's decision to pause Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO, a treatment used to support someone with a failing heart or a failing lung) within General Critical Care. During the pause, the Board decided that ECMO would be offered in limited circumstances in the Cardiac Intensive Treatment Unit.

The Board investigated C's concerns at stage 2 of the whistleblowing procedure. The investigation upheld one aspect of C's concerns and made recommendations. One of the recommendations was to carry out an options appraisal to look at how ECMO could be provided in the future. Following the options appraisal, and after waiting to see the outcome of discussions, C was not satisfied with the Board's progress and they complained to the INWO.

Within their complaint to the INWO, C set out a number of outcomes they were looking to achieve. Following agreement with C, the INWO explored the possibility of a resolution with the Board. Discussions involving C and the Board focussed on ensuring a balance between patients receiving timely treatment and ensuring that those delivering the treatment have the appropriate training and experience to perform the procedure. There was also the requirement for the proposals to be approved through the Board's Clinical Governance processes

After the Board approved procedures relating to ECMO within their Clinical Governance process, C confirmed that they were satisfied that this action addressed the patient safety risks they had raised. In view of this, we decided to discontinue the investigation of C's complaint. However, we provided feedback to the Board about timeliness and supporting staff working in the service.