

Case: 201101077, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: appointments; admissions (delay, cancellation, waiting lists)
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C first visited his GP in September 2009 with pain and swelling in his testicles and was referred to the urology team at the Western General Hospital. He was placed on a waiting list for treatment. He was seen in January 2010 by two specialists who could not agree a diagnosis and referred for a scan which was done in February. In March he was seen by another urologist and told that his problem was not a urology one. Mr C was referred back to the general surgical department and in April 2010 he received a letter telling him that he was on the waiting list to see a consultant.

Mr C telephoned the department to complain about this further delay but was told that nothing could be done. Mr C was seen in July 2010 in the colorectal department and referred for an MRI scan. He was seen again there in September 2010 and a hernia was diagnosed. Mr C was told that due to his other complex health difficulties, the remedial surgery he required would have to be done at another hospital by a specific surgeon. Mr C was seen there in November 2010 and had his surgery in January 2011. Mr C was dissatisfied with the wait for surgery which totalled some 64 weeks and the resultant increase in pain and discomfort he had to endure.

We upheld Mr C's complaint. We found that his wait for surgery had been excessive. There were a number of things that could have been done differently which would have reduced his waiting time. A CT scan was first considered in March 2010, but was not performed until August 2010. Mr C was reviewed by two registrars, who could have discussed his case with a consultant, given there were clear diagnostic difficulties. It was not until November 2010, over a year after Mr C had first been referred, that a consultant took responsibility for the management of his care. We also found the board's responses to Mr C's letters of complaint to be insufficient.

Recommendation

We recommended that the board:

- provide a full apology to Mr C for the delay he experienced when waiting to undergo his operation.