

Case: 201001453, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: complaints handling
Outcome: upheld, action taken by body to remedy, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that the board's handling of her complaint was inadequate. The board dealt with her initial complaint by arranging a meeting between her and a service manager. However, this did not take place until nearly two months after she complained. Mrs C later made further complaints to the board. The board told her that they had already issued a response to her complaint. Mrs C then wrote to us. However, it was clear that the board had not responded to many of the points she had raised and we referred the complaint back to them for a response. The board took a further three months to issue a response, and their letter failed to explain the reasons for this delay.

Mrs C continued to write to the board, and the chief executive issued a further response to her, in offering a meeting with two of the board's directors. Mrs C accepted the offer and met the directors. However, at the meeting, the directors both said that they did not consider that the chief executive's letter had addressed her concerns. They said that they wished to revoke this and send her a revised letter. The chief executive then issued a full response to Mrs C. He said that it was evident that the board's response to her complaints could have been significantly improved.

We upheld Mrs C's complaint, as our investigation found that the board clearly delayed in responding, and failed to explain the reasons for these delays to her. Their earlier responses also did not address her complaints adequately or take on board all of the problems she raised.

However, we considered that the board's final letter to Mrs C was a detailed response to the complaints she had made. It was issued after the board had carried out a thorough investigation. We were pleased to see that the board identified that their earlier responses to Mrs C's complaints were not satisfactory and undertook a further investigation into the matter. The board also apologised for the length of time it had taken to complete the investigation and

the distress this had caused. They also said that they were reviewing their complaints procedures to ensure that significant improvement was achieved. In view of all of this, we had no recommendations to make.