

SPSO decision report

Case: 201201199, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment the board provided after he went to their accident and emergency department (A&E). He said that they failed to appropriately examine and assess his symptoms of severe abdominal pain with urinary and bowel problems. He also said that they inappropriately discharged him at 05:30 in the morning without considering whether he had the means or ability to return safely home. Mr C said that after seeking further medical assistance elsewhere, he was admitted to hospital the next day with an obstructed bowel and was kept in for assessment and treatment.

We took independent advice on this case from one of our medical advisers. The adviser said that the assessment and examination in A&E were of a reasonable standard and that the treatment Mr C received elsewhere the next day did not indicate otherwise, so we did not uphold his complaint about care and treatment. However, the adviser was critical of the board for failing to have adequate discussions with Mr C about treatment for constipation and failing to give him laxatives to take home with him. The adviser also said that they failed to discuss practical arrangements for Mr C's discharge to ensure that he could return home safely. We upheld the complaint about discharge and made recommendations accordingly.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- provide Mr C with a written apology for the failings identified;
- feed back our adviser's comments on the treatment of Mr C's constipation to the staff who examined him in A&E; and
- remind relevant nursing staff of the need to discuss and make appropriate discharge arrangements for patients in A&E and record this information in the clinical notes.
-