

SPSO decision report

Case: 201302689, Grampian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's young son (Master A) was referred to a speech and language therapy service. Two blocks of treatment were provided and, due to Mrs C's concerns about her son's speech, a second opinion on his treatment was sought in the first month of the second block of treatment. The service did not feel that Master A needed further direct therapy after the second block of treatment, and he was instead seen for a review every three months. Mrs C was unhappy with this and at these appointments asked for additional materials to work on with her son at home. The service, however, were not prepared to provide these. Mrs C emailed them expressing her dissatisfaction and requesting the materials be provided, which the service treated as a formal complaint. Mrs C was unhappy with the outcome of this and complained to us that her son was not provided with adequate care and treatment and that the response to her complaint was inaccurate and insensitive, and implied that she had refused treatment for him.

We took independent advice from one of our advisers, a specialist in working with children with speech difficulties. She said that the service's approach was largely correct and in line with their published guidelines. She also said that, although the service had acted correctly when deciding whether or not to provide materials for home working, they should have taken account of Mrs C's concerns about her son's speech and her determination to work with him at home. We did not uphold the complaint as our investigation found that the service provided a reasonable standard of care and treatment to Master A, although we did make a recommendation based on our adviser's comments. We also found that the language used in the response to Mrs C's complaint was appropriate, and that the letter did not contain any factual inaccuracies about the provision of treatment or the family's engagement with it.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- consider reviewing their guidelines to ensure parental concerns are considered when additional materials for home working are requested.