

SPSO decision report

Case: 201303926, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C, a member of the Scottish Parliament, complained on behalf of one of his constituents (Ms A) about the care and treatment she received following an operation at Gartnavel General Hospital. He said that the plans for Ms A's discharge home were inadequate and that there was a failure to ensure that she was technically able to deal with the catheter (a thin tube used to drain and collect urine from the bladder) that was a consequence of the operation. He also complained that there was a failure to review her in a timely manner, that arrangements for reviews were confused, that Ms A's concerns about her operation were dismissed and that the operation had not greatly improved her condition.

The complaint was investigated and carefully considered all the relevant documentation (including all the complaints correspondence and Ms A's clinical records). We also obtained independent advice on Ms A's care and treatment from one of our medical advisers, a consultant urological surgeon (dealing with issues of the urinary tract).

Our investigation showed that the clinical aspects of Ms A's care and treatment were reasonable, as were her discharge plans. We found no evidence to suggest that her concerns about her operation had been dismissed. However, plans to review her were frustrated by confused administration and poor communication between departments which no doubt caused Ms A unnecessary stress and inconvenience at what must have been a difficult time. This was unacceptable and amounted to a service failure, and we upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- make a formal apology to Ms A for the added stress she experienced;
- confirm to the Ombudsman that procedures for making x-ray appointments are now effective and robust, and advise of the actions taken to ensure this; and
- advise the Ombudsman that they are satisfied that the communications problems affecting Ms A's appointments have now been addressed.