

SPSO decision report

Case: 201305717, Grampian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained on behalf of her sister-in-law (Mrs A) that the board cancelled Mrs A's facial reconstruction surgery at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, and did not provide a reasonable explanation for this. From what Mrs C described, this was clearly an upsetting experience for Mrs A.

We looked at information from Mrs C and the board, and took independent advice from one of our medical advisers. We found that the board cancelled the operation because at the time there were not enough nurses to staff the intensive care bed that Mrs A needed afterwards, because of emergency admissions. The board said that this was not what they would have wanted for Mrs A, but that they had to put her safety first. They also explained to us what they had done to deal with demand for post-operative intensive care beds in future. Although we understood why Mrs A had found this distressing, we did not uphold Mrs C's complaints, as we found that the cancellation was not unreasonable in the circumstances, and that the board had provided a reasonable explanation of why it happened.