

SPSO decision report

Case: 201401475, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that she was not offered reasonable treatment by the board for urinary retention problems she developed following hip surgery, when she was referred to them from another health board. She also said there were unreasonable delays in her accessing treatment from the board.

We obtained independent medical advice on this case from two of our advisers: a consultant urologist and an urologically trained nurse.

Our urologist adviser said it was common practice for a consultant to accept patients either by referral by phone or letter and then, based on the clinical need, to arrange further assessment/investigations prior to seeing a patient, as happened in Mrs C's case. However, our adviser considered that if Mrs C could have been seen earlier to explain the reasons for arranging investigations and home assessments and to provide reassurance prior to her out-patient consultation, further distress could have been potentially prevented.

Our nursing adviser explained that the actions of the nursing staff were exactly what she would have expected and said Mrs C's treatment was in line with the guidelines in this area.

Both our advisers found that the timescale for Mrs C's treatment was satisfactory and acceptable and could find no evidence to suggest that there was an unreasonable lack of urgency about her situation which resulted in her being left with long term health problems. However, although we didn't uphold Mrs C's complaints about her treatment, we considered that their communication with her about her treatment could have been much better and that their failing in this area resulted in increased distress and anxiety for Mrs C so we made two recommendations.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- feed back the advisers' comments on communication with Mrs C to the clinical and nursing staff involved; and
- provide Mrs C with a written apology for failing to communicate clearly with her about her proposed treatment.