

SPSO decision report

Case: 201405284, Golden Jubilee National Hospital
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about a number of issues regarding her care and treatment at the Golden Jubilee National Hospital. She was also unhappy about the way in which her complaint was handled.

Mrs C was concerned about the lack of action by a doctor between November 2012 and September 2013 which she felt impacted on a decision taken in August 2014 that she required further heart surgery. Mrs C also complained about the actions of a second doctor in dealing with her care given that he was aware of her dissatisfaction with the first doctor.

We took independent advice from a cardiologist. We found that the first doctor unreasonably delayed in discussing Mrs C's case at multi-disciplinary team meeting and in reviewing Mrs C, which meant that her symptoms would have persisted unnecessarily causing her distress. We made a recommendation about this.

However, we did not consider that these delays would have impacted on Mrs C's need to undergo further surgery. We considered that the second doctor's actions were reasonable and noted that Mrs C had been given an apology about the delays in the management of her earlier care.

We concluded that the handling of Mrs C's complaint fell below a reasonable standard because the hospital initially dealt with it outwith their complaints procedure and because of the time they took to complete their investigation. We made a recommendation to address this.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- share these findings with relevant staff involved in Mrs C's care to ensure timely case discussions and follow-up reviews are carried out;
- share these findings with relevant staff in order to ensure that staff dealing with complaints inform people of their right of appeal to us on complaints which have been time barred; and
- ensure that relevant staff provide timely responses in terms of their complaints procedure and apologise to Mrs C for failing to handle her complaint within a reasonable timescale.