

SPSO decision report

Case: 201405649, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C, who was a patient of the community mental health team, complained that she had been discharged from the service contrary to advice given to her by phone, which was that her case would remain open so that she could arrange support, as needed, related to her employment. The board said a work development officer told Ms C she would be discharged after a period of five weeks. We were unable to reconcile the two very different accounts of this conversation. We found no supporting evidence that the board had reasonably followed their operational procedures which said that discharges from the service were planned with the patient, with advice on staying well and appropriate contact numbers for support organisations clearly communicated. We also found no evidence that a written copy of the discharge summary had been sent to Ms C's GP as it should have been. We recommended that the board review the discharge process.

We found that two mistakes had been made in the response to Ms C's complaint. Firstly the person named as having spoken to Ms C whilst she was attended her appointment had not done so. The second error was a reference to Ms C's employment being temporary rather than probationary. In view of the communication errors we asked the board to apologise to Ms C.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- ensure that patients, GPs and other agencies are being given clear information at the point of discharge in line with the stated operational policy; and
- apologise for failing to communicate effectively with Ms C in relation to her discharge and for the inaccuracies identified within the response to her complaint.