

SPSO decision report

Case: 201500016, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C, who works for an advice agency, complained to us on behalf of Mr A that the board had failed to diagnose what was causing his hypoglycaemia (low level of glucose in his blood). Mr A had been diagnosed with type 1 diabetes as a child. In his early twenties, he started to have hypoglycaemic episodes and was told to reduce his doses of insulin. He continued to have these episodes and was admitted to hospital on a number of occasions to be monitored.

We took independent advice on the complaint from a medical adviser, who is a consultant in medicine and endocrinology. We found that Mr A's recurrent hypoglycaemia had been promptly and appropriately investigated by the board and they had reasonably tried to manage this by giving him an insulin pump. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

Mr C also complained that nursing staff had failed to provide reasonable treatment to Mr A when he was in Broadford Hospital. However, we found that the nursing staff had acted appropriately and we did not uphold this complaint.

Finally, Mr C complained about the board's handling of Mr A's complaint. We found that there had been an unreasonable delay by the board in responding to the complaint, although they had apologised for this delay in their response to Mr A. The board had also failed to respond to Mr A's complaint about nursing staff in Broadford Hospital. In view of these failings, we upheld this complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- issue a written apology to Mr A for failing to respond to all of the issues he had raised in his complaint; and
- make the staff involved in the handling of Mr A's complaint aware of our decision.