

SPSO decision report

Case: 201501196, Glasgow Clyde College
Sector: further and higher education
Subject: special needs - assessment and provision
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's son (Mr A) disclosed several conditions when he started college, and extended learning supports were agreed, including an audio recorder, a laptop, and one-to-one mentoring. Mrs C said it took a long time for the laptop and audio recorder to be provided, and although Mr A was given permission to use his electronic tablet to record classes in the meantime, a teacher then told him to turn this off. Mrs C also said the laptop provided was faulty, and the college did not do anything about this. Mrs C raised concerns that Mr A's teachers were not made aware of his conditions, and when Mr A suffered migraine symptoms in class on one occasion a teacher told him to go home, which was dangerous. Mrs C also complained that the college stopped Mr A's bursary and Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), although Mr A had medical certificates to justify his absence from class following a car accident.

The college apologised that the provision of support for Mr A was not as consistent as they strive to deliver, and took action to improve their processes for providing assistive technology and to ensure teachers are aware of support agreements.

After investigating the issues, we upheld two of Mrs C's complaints. We found the delays in agreeing and providing support for Mr A were unreasonable. Although the incidents with the electronic tablet and the migraine occurred before the additional support was agreed (and the teacher could not have been aware of Mr A's additional needs at that time), we found the support agreement was then sent to the wrong department, which meant teachers were not aware of this for a further four months. We noted that the college had already apologised and taken appropriate action to improve their processes, but we recommended some further action in relation to the delay in assessing Mr A's needs. In relation to the EMA and bursary payments we found that the college had followed their procedures in stopping these payments and we did not uphold this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the college:

- review their processes to ensure that students' responsibilities in relation to self-referral is clear, and that their automatic referral processes capture all incoming students who identify additional support needs (regardless of the stage at which this occurs).