

SPSO decision report

Case: 201501942, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the length of time he had to wait for surgery for prostate cancer and said that the board did not provide treatment in line with the national waiting time targets. We took independent advice from a medical adviser. We found that the GP referral for Mr C was acted on promptly by the board's urology service and the time taken to reach a diagnosis of prostate cancer was reasonable taking into account the complexity of Mr C's case. However, after the decision was reached to proceed with surgical treatment for Mr C's cancer there was a lack of co-ordination in gathering all the information and beginning treatment which meant the waiting time target was not met. Although we found that the delay was unlikely to have affected the long-term outcome, the delay and lack of information provided would have added to the uncertainty and anxiety for Mr C at what would have been a very difficult time for him. We concluded that the overall care he received was not of an acceptable standard and led to an avoidable delay.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise to Mr C for the failings identified; and
- review the circumstances regarding Mr C's case to ensure that, in future cases, care is appropriately co-ordinated with adequate information given to the patient and taking into account appropriate waiting time targets.