

SPSO decision report

Case: 201508758, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Miss C's young daughter (Miss A) has suffered gastrointestinal problems for most of her life and has had many hospital admissions. Miss C complained that she was treated unprofessionally and made to feel uncomfortable and inadequate by staff at Raigmore Hospital. She said that meetings were held behind her back and she was given very little notice about a multi-disciplinary meeting held to discuss her daughter's care. Miss C complained that the board failed to communicate with her appropriately about her daughter and that her daughter had not been provided with appropriate clinical treatment.

The board apologised if Miss C had been made to feel uncomfortable and said that this had not been their intention. They also said that meetings held to discuss Miss A had been routine and in her best interest; they said that she had been treated appropriately.

We took independent advice from a consultant paediatrician and we found that while Miss A's initial care was reasonable, given her longstanding problems, her admission to hospital to consider her symptoms should have taken place earlier than it did. Also, by the time a specialist dietician became involved in her care, Miss A had dietary deficiencies which had been likely to have been present for some time. We were also critical that some of the dietician notes were not available when we asked for Miss A's full medical record, so we made a recommendation to address this issue.

In relation to the way the board communicated with Miss C, the evidence showed that Miss C was given very little notice of a multi-disciplinary meeting held to discuss her daughter's care. There appeared to have been no effort to arrange a suitable date and time with her and she was put under unreasonable pressure to attend. We also found that she had not been given an explanation for meeting to discuss a child plan for her daughter. We therefore upheld Miss C's complaints.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- make a formal apology to recognise the shortcomings in Miss A's care;
- ensure that the findings of this complaint are fed back to staff;
- take steps to ensure that they are complying with 'Records Management: NHS Code of Practice (Scotland)';
- make a formal apology for what happened in connection with the multi-disciplinary meeting, and also for failing to provide reasons why it was intended to hold a child plan meeting; and
- ensure that where discussions take place between professionals, an appropriate record is kept on file.