

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201601007, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)  
**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C's son (Mr A) is in long-term foster care. He has ear problems requiring him to attend hospital. Ms C complained that she was not always informed of Mr A's appointments and that, on occasion, appointments for him were cancelled without her knowledge or permission. She said that although she wanted to discuss Mr A's diagnosis and prognosis with his consultant, her request to do so was refused. She further complained that the board refused unreasonably to send her a detailed consent form in advance of the surgery he required.

Ms C made her complaint to the board who confirmed that there had been difficulty in always keeping her informed of Mr A's appointments because of the limitations of their current patient management system and also due to human error. They apologised that this had been the case but said that they had had discussions to improve the system. They said that in the interim they had appointed a member of staff to regularly check the system in order to update Ms C. However, they denied that appointments for Mr A had been cancelled unreasonably or that staff had not been prepared to discuss his care with Ms C. They said that she had been spoken to and given explanatory information about Mr A's condition and about the operation he needed.

We made further enquiries of the board and also sought confirmation of Mr A's status as a looked after child. We obtained independent advice from a medical adviser on the matter of consent. We found that there had been problems in keeping Ms C up to date about Mr A's medical appointments but that, where appointments had been cancelled, cancellations had been made in accordance with the board's procedures. The board had also offered to meet with Ms C to discuss Mr A's diagnosis and prognosis but she had been unable to attend. We found that they had discussed it with her immediately before Mr A's operation and provided her with explanatory documentation. However, they could have given these explanatory leaflets sooner and so we upheld this aspect of Ms C's complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Ms C for failing to always keep her informed of Mr A's appointments.
- Apologise to Ms C for failing to provide her with information that she had requested about Mr A's diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. The apology should comply with SPSO's 'Guidance on Apology', which can be found at [www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance](http://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance).

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.