

SPSO decision report

Case: 201607803, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: complaints handling
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C, a prisoner, complained about how her complaints were being responded to by the board. The board had written to Ms C informing her that the volume of complaints, comments and feedback she was submitting was putting a disproportionate strain on their resources and impacting on their ability to assist other people. They asked Ms C to adjust her behaviour. They said they were taking action under their Unacceptable Actions Policy and would be limiting the responses they gave to her complaints, focusing only on those they deemed most significant and which had not been resolved at the time.

Ms C continued to submit complaints.

We found that the board's policies on restricting contact were confusing and that clearer information could have been given to Ms C regarding the board's expectations and what they would do to manage Ms C's behaviour if she continued to submit high volumes of complaints. For that reason we upheld the complaint and made a recommendation to address it. We did not recommend an apology for Ms C as, although there had been a lack of clarity on the board's part, Ms C was well aware of the impact her actions were having on the board and did not take the opportunity to modify her behaviour.

Recommendations

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- The board should have a clearer policy for unreasonable or unacceptable actions, to enable them to efficiently manage unreasonable actions.

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.