

SPSO decision report

Case: 201701299, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: health
Subject: appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained on behalf of his mother (Mrs A) who was admitted to Glasgow Royal Infirmary's Acute Assessment Unit (AAU). Mr C complained that there was a delay in providing a bed for his mother. Mrs A's complaint to the board was originally made on her behalf by an MSP. Mr C also complained that the board's handling of this complaint was unreasonable.

We took independent advice from a consultant in acute medicine and from a nurse. We found that the care and treatment provided to Mrs A was reasonable. We noted that there is often a wait for a bed to become available in a hospital ward, so that a patient can be transferred to an appropriate ward from a unit such as the AAU. However, we found that it took six hours for Mrs A to be moved from a trolley to a bed in the AAU. Given Mrs A's age and several health problems, we considered that this delay was unreasonable. Therefore, we upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

In relation to the board's complaints handling, Mr C said that there were errors in their response to the complaint that the MSP had made. We found that there was an error in Mrs A's name, however, this was the name used by the MSP when making the complaint. We noted that the board could have confirmed Mrs A's name with the MSP's office and used the correct name in their response. However, we found that, other than the error in Mrs A's name, the board's response to the complaint was reasonable and appropriate. Therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Recommendations

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

- The board should consider whether the current prioritisation in the hospital's AAU for moving elderly patients with additional diseases from a trolley to a bed is appropriate, taking account of the relevant 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.