

SPSO decision report

Case: 201702530, Western Isles NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about aspects of the physiotherapy care provided to her child (child A), who has complex care needs.

Mrs C complained that the physiotherapy provided to child A did not reflect their needs. We took independent advice from a physiotherapist. We found that, for the most part, child A received appropriate physiotherapy for their condition. Although we found some gaps in the record-keeping, we concluded that, on the whole, the care and treatment provided to child A was reasonable. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

Mrs C also raised concern that the board failed to provide appropriate physiotherapy input to child A following administration of a treatment at a hospital in another health board's area. We found that the board had appropriately liaised with the other health board, and that child A received an increase in physiotherapy following the treatment. We found this to be reasonable and we did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

Lastly, Mrs C complained that the board had not communicated with her reasonably about a change in physiotherapy service provided to child A and that child A would no longer be working with a physiotherapy assistant. We found that the board had arranged an event to update families about changes in the physiotherapy service. However, we found that, in the period prior to this, there was no evidence to suggest that Mrs C was informed that child A would no longer be working with the physiotherapy assistant. The advice we received also noted that there was no evidence that a reduction in the frequency of physiotherapy input was discussed with Mrs C. We upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mrs C and child A for the lack of documented reasons for the change in frequency of physiotherapy input; the lack of communication in relation to this; and failure to inform Mrs C that child A would no longer be working with the physiotherapy assistant. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance>.

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

- Physiotherapy staff should explain decisions and ensure children, young people and families fully understand them and their implications, especially if the final decision is not what they hoped for. Staff should also document decisions and the communication of these in the records.

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.