

SPSO decision report

Case: 201805023, Grampian NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C, a patient advice and support advocate, complained on behalf of her client (Miss A). She complained about the care and treatment Miss A received by the diabetology (diagnosis and treatment of diabetes) and neurology (diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the nervous system) services in relation to a range of symptoms including stomach pain, nausea, headaches, and dizziness and her diagnosis of Postural Tachycardia Syndrome (PoTS, an abnormal increase in heart rate that occurs after sitting up or standing).

We took advice from a consultant diabetologist and a consultant neurologist. We found that much of the care and treatment provided to Miss A was reasonable. However, there was a significant delay in follow-up from the neurologist, which the board had already agreed was unreasonable and apologised for. On this basis, on balance, we upheld this aspect of the complaint. However as the board had already apologised and taken action we did not make any recommendations on this point.

In relation to complaint handling, we found that there was a significant delay in the complaint being responded to by the board. Though we noted that the board had apologised for this, they had not given any explanation as to what caused the delay. They also did not evidence that Miss A was kept updated during the delays. We therefore made a recommendation to the board in relation to their complaint handling.

Recommendations

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Complaint responses should be provided in a timely manner, and where they will take longer than 20 working days complainants should be kept informed of the reasons for delays, in line with the model complaints handling procedure.

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.