

SPSO decision report

Case: 201807436, Fife NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained to the board on behalf of her son (Mr A), who had a diagnosis of autism. Mrs C was unhappy with aspects of the care and treatment provided to Mr A by the mental health service at Queen Margaret Hospital.

Mrs C firstly raised concern about the communication surrounding the prescription of a medication. The board upheld Mrs C's complaint and apologised that the information provided about the dose was not clear. We found that Mr A had taken a greater dose than intended; however, the dose taken was still within the safe limits of prescribing for this medication. We concluded that the board had taken reasonable action in light of the matter. We upheld the complaint but did not make recommendations.

Mrs C was also unhappy with the psychiatric care and treatment provided to Mr A more generally. We took independent advice from a consultant psychiatrist. We found that there was a reasonable level of assessment, treatment, and clinical management of Mr A during his consultations with the service. We did not uphold this complaint.

Finally, Mrs C raised concern about some of the language used in the board's complaint response. We considered that the use of one term or another was a matter of preference and we did not conclude that there were failings in the language used. However, we did consider that the time taken for the board to respond to Mrs C's complaint was excessive. On balance, we upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- In line with the NHS Scotland Complaints Handling Procedure, the person making the complaint should receive a full response to the complaint as soon as possible but not later than 20 working days, unless an extension is required. Delays in the investigation should be minimised.

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.