

SPSO decision report



Case: 201900773, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: Health
Subject: appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained that there was an unreasonable delay in being seen by neurological (relating to the anatomy, functions, and organic disorders of nerves and the nervous system) services after being referred with back and leg pain; and that when they were seen the care and treatment provided was unreasonable. C also complained that the communication from the board in relation to these matters was unreasonable.

We took independent advice from a neurologist. We found that the timescale for C's neurology appointment was unreasonable as it did not meet the NHS Scotland timescales. We upheld this aspect of C's complaint.

We considered that whilst the care provided to C at their appointment was of a good standard, and it was reasonable to conclude that no further neurological input was required, the timeframe between the appointment and the eventual decision was over ten weeks and we considered this to be unreasonable. We therefore upheld this aspect of C's complaint.

Finally, in relation to communication, whilst we fed back to the board that they may wish to reflect on how they communicate timescales for appointments, we noted that once the decision not to provide further treatment to C had been made this was communicated in a prompt manner. We therefore did not uphold this aspect of C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the unreasonable delay in providing C with an appointment following their referral to neurosurgical services, the unreasonable timeframe between the consultation and eventual decision, and that the Advanced Physiotherapy Practitioner did not have appropriate and timely access to a consultant opinion. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets

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

- 95% of patients referred to neurosurgery should receive a first out-patient appointment within 12 weeks.
- Clinics being run by a non-consultant grade practitioner should have prompt access to a consultant or nominated deputy in order for decisions to treat or discharge to be made promptly.

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.