

SPSO decision report

Case: 201904371, Fife NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

C submitted a complaint on behalf of their child (A) about the treatment provided by the board in relation to A's eating disorder. C said that A had been diagnosed with Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID), however, in subsequent contact this term was not used by board staff.

We took independent advice from a consultant psychiatrist who had experience working with people with eating disorders. We found that the board had provided reasonable treatment to A. It was recognised that A would benefit from intensive input and the board offered an individualised approach to treatment. The board set out a clear rationale for the proposed treatment that was appropriate for A's identified needs. While there was inconsistency in using the term ARFID to describe A's diagnosis this did not impact on the treatment offered to A. Therefore, we did not uphold C's complaint.

While we did not uphold this complaint, we have made recommendations to the board for failing to explain the varying use of ARFID in the complaint response. We have made these recommendations under section 16G of the SPSO Act 2002, which requires the Ombudsman to monitor and promote best practice in relation to complaints handling.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for failing to provide a reasonable explanation regarding the varying use of the term ARFID when responding to their complaint. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- The board's complaints responses should provide reasonable explanations of the actions taken/terms used as necessary to respond to a complaint.

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.