

SPSO decision report



Case: 202000531, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: Health
Subject: communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about the board's communications with them regarding the treatment of their children. C's children have a congenital condition which requires steroid replacement treatment and regular monitoring. C was dissatisfied with the treatment provided by the board and initiated the process to have the children transferred to another provider for treatment. The board gave inconsistent messages about the referral process and C was left unclear about the steps being taken to transfer the children's treatment. Some months elapsed during which the children did not receive treatment.

During our investigation, we found that the board's position regarding the referral had been inconsistent and confusing. Had they been clearer with C about the referral process, C's children could have accessed treatment much sooner. Given their need for regular monitoring, this was a significant failing. We found that the board's communication had been unreasonable and, therefore, upheld this complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failings in communication, with a recognition of the impact this had on their family. 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:

- Staff should communicate clearly about who is responsible for doing what in this type of situation. In particular they must ensure the relevant information is clearly conveyed to the patient.

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.