

SPSO decision report



Case: 202000782, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained on behalf of their spouse (A) about the treatment they received from the board. A was originally referred to a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist (specialist in pregnancy, childbirth and the female reproductive system) at a different health board. Following further investigations, A's case was discussed at a multidisciplinary team meeting (MDT) which includes specialists from health boards in the west of Scotland. As Glasgow has a subspecialty in gynaecological cancers, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board took the lead in determining A's treatment plan. A was diagnosed with probable ovarian cancer and was treated with chemotherapy and surgery.

C complained about a delay in starting A's treatment, about the decision not to offer chemotherapy first and about how the board responded to their contacts during this time.

We took independent advice from a consultant gynaecological oncologist (cancer specialist). Scottish Government guidance, NHS Scotland performance against Local Delivery Plan standards, says that 95% of all patients diagnosed with cancer are to begin treatment within 31 days of decision to treat. A's treatment was not provided until 40 days later (nine days more than the guidance). Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board were responsible for meeting this target, and it was not met. We upheld this complaint.

We found that while some clinicians would have treated with chemotherapy first, it was also completely acceptable practice, and indeed encouraged by relevant clinical guidelines, to provide surgery first. We did not uphold this complaint.

We considered the communication between C, A and the board. We found that while not every contact was responded to as quickly as the board said it would, and some communication was passed on without acknowledgement, the board did respond to the substantive questions C and A raised and had appointed a single point of contact to help communication going forward. We did not uphold this complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to A for failing to meet the Local Delivery Plan standard. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

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.