

SPSO decision report

Case: 202001260, Highland NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained that they were unreasonably discharged from the pain clinic on two occasions. C had their first session with the pain clinic and then their first telephone session with a nurse the following month. In the interim, C was admitted to hospital for their mental health. At a multidisciplinary team meeting (MDT) it was decided to discharge C from the pain service due to their psychiatric admission.

C was later reinstated to the pain service and was offered an appointment but later complained about the service. C was discharged from the service again because of a statement they made in their complaint which led the board to believe C did not want any further contact from the pain service. C complained about both decisions to discharge them from the pain service.

We took independent advice from a consultant psychiatrist. We found that it is routine management to prioritise one acute (immediate) health issue over other longer term issues. Those longer term issues may complicate the management of the immediate health issue. In this case, that would have been C's recent mental health admission. We also noted that the board had acknowledged and apologised for communicating their decision about the first discharge poorly. We found that C had said in their complaint to the board that they did not want the services of the pain clinic anymore. While it would have been good practice to clarify what the patient truly wanted before discharging them from the service, it was not unreasonable to take C's statement at face value. We did not uphold C's complaints.