

SPSO decision report

Case: 202003203, Highland NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C, an advocate for A, complained about the actions of the board's paediatrics department in relation to child protection concerns raised about A's child (B). C complained that the board did not reasonably communicate with A about the concerns raised and that they took an unreasonable length of time to arrange a child protection conference. C also complained that the board failed to fully involve the family GP in the child protection process and to explain the rationale for proposing to reassess B's autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnosis.

To investigate C's concerns, we reviewed the relevant clinical records and sought independent advice from a consultant community paediatrician. Our investigation found that the steps taken to invite A to a meeting to discuss the concerns about B and to share a summary of the professionals meeting held were reasonable. We also concluded that from the time the concerns were noted to holding a child protection conference, it was reasonable to consult with other professionals, gather information and attempt to speak with A. As such, we did not consider there was an unreasonable delay in holding the child protection case conference.

We also found evidence that the family GP was invited to a professionals meeting by email, however, due to administrative errors outwith the board's control, the email was not received by the GP. With regards to the reassessment of B's ASD diagnosis, we concluded this was explained both in writing and at a meeting. We therefore did not uphold C's complaints.