

SPSO decision report

Case: 202104143, Western Isles NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C engaged with the board's mental health services and believed that they had received a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD, a mental disorder characterised by the instability in mood, behaviour, and functioning). They complained to the board that they had been prematurely discharged from mental health services. They also complained about delays, confusion affecting appointments, as well as a failure from the board to reasonably assess their condition.

The board's position was that C had been discharged originally due to a lack of response to correspondence. When C was thereafter seen by mental health services they acknowledged some confusion with respect to the arrangement for an appointment. With respect to the subsequent appointments C attended, the board explained that there was evidence of possible BPD, but that a diagnosis had not been confirmed. A further appointment was arranged but C did not manage to keep the appointment. The board considered that the psychiatric consultations, over the telephone, were appropriate and did not uphold C's complaints.

We took independent advice from a specialist in community psychiatry. We found that it was reasonable to discharge C given the evidence available and that they had received no response to their attempts to contact them. Given attempts were made to contact C, we did not uphold the complaint that C was unreasonably discharged.

With respect to the psychiatric assessment and diagnosis of BPD, we found that the assessments carried out were careful and competent, the diagnostic statement was reasonable and that there was no firm diagnosis made, with reasonable advice and plan for follow up. Whilst it was concerning that C had formed the view that the diagnosis was definite, and it was acknowledged that assessments via Teams were preferred over telephone (as occurred in this case), we found that the assessment of C was reasonable. We did not uphold the complaint.