

Case: 201001541, Borders NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C raised concerns on behalf of his son, Mr A, about the care and treatment that Mr A received from the local community addiction team. He complained that Mr A had been given inconsistent information and contradictory advice about methadone prescriptions. He was also concerned about what he considered to be inconsistent attitudes from members of staff, which had caused Mr A distress and anxiety. In addition Mr C complained about the tone and content of the Board's funding application letter, written for the purpose of referring Mr A to a full time residential placement. We found that overall the treatment options were reasonable and consistent with good practice. However, we upheld Mr C's complaint about methadone prescriptions, in that the explanations provided for prescription changes were not always adequate. We also found that the Board's letter setting out the funding application provided an unjustified negative clinical opinion and failed to set out details of the criteria for funding.

Recommendations

We recommend that Borders NHS Board:

- apologise to Mr A and his family for their failure to adequately communicate the reasons for their prescribing decisions to him and for the distress this caused him and his family;
- apologise to Mr A and his family for the negative comments contained in the funding referral letter dated 20 October 2009; and
- review the procedure for funding applications to ensure staff and applicants are aware of a) the process and b) the criteria used in reaching decisions.