

SPSO decision report

Case: 201005150, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: hotel services - food, laundry etc
Outcome: some upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C, who is a vegan, was scheduled to have an operation in the day surgery unit (DSU) at the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh. At her pre-operative assessment she arranged for vegan food to be available. Ms C also suffers from a severe and chronic condition that is worsened by exertion, stress and lack of food. As this meant that it was possible that her hospital stay might be extended, four days of vegan meals were also to be available in the DSU. This was recorded in the clinical notes. Ms C had her surgery and was transferred from the DSU to a ward to recover, but the information about the food was not passed on. Ms C did not receive her lunch until 90 minutes after the rest of the ward had been served. The Board acknowledged that there was a communications breakdown in that the meals information did not follow Ms C from the DSU to the ward. They explained to us that there is in fact always vegan food available, but they had now made all staff involved aware of the communication failures that took place and what they should do in future. Wards and units have also been provided with a list of the vegan food permanently available from the catering department. As the Board had already taken appropriate action on this we upheld the complaint but did not find it necessary to make any further recommendations. Ms C also complained that her wheelchair and her bag - which contained vegan snacks that she had brought with her - were delayed in being transferred to the ward. We found, however, that these were available within one hour of Ms C going to the ward. We considered this reasonable, and did not uphold this complaint.