

SPSO decision report

Case: 201404209, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment provided to his daughter (Miss A) at Forth Valley Royal Hospital. He was dissatisfied that she was not reviewed by a cardiologist (doctor specialising in disorders of the heart) when she reached the age of two, despite concerns about her heart when she was born. He complained that he was not informed about the change of plan about reviewing her. Mr C was also unhappy that the board's complaints team had access to Miss A's clinical records without his consent, that they took an unreasonable length of time to respond to his complaint, and that they did not respond reasonably to his questions.

We took independent advice on this case from one of our medical advisers who is a consultant paediatric cardiologist. We did not identify clear evidence that Mr C had been told Miss A would be reviewed at the age of two. We considered that the care given to Miss A was in accordance with established good practice, and there was no evidence of a heart defect requiring further review. It would have been difficult for the board's complaints team to respond fully to Mr C's concerns without access to Miss A's clinical records. However, there was no evidence that Mr C was clearly informed of the possibility that relevant health records would be handled by a member of the complaints team (in accordance with national complaints handling guidance and the board's procedures). Therefore, we upheld this part of the complaint.

We considered, on balance, that the board's responses were reasonable and were issued to Mr C without undue delay.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- draw to relevant staff's attention the failings identified.