

SPSO decision report

Case: 201500357, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Miss C raised a number of issues about the time taken by the health board to arrange her appointment for day surgery and that, when it eventually took place, it was outwith the timescales for the Treatment Time Guarantee (TTG) of 12 weeks. Miss C also mentioned that she had told staff she was willing to take a cancellation if that meant earlier surgery but that this was not noted in her records. She was also dissatisfied with the time taken to deal with her formal complaint.

We found that the board had in fact noted that Miss C was willing to take a cancellation and that they had arranged for an earlier admission which would have met the TTG but that it had to be cancelled due to the unavailability of a bed. We found that the board were taking action behind the scenes but this was not adequately communicated to Miss C. We also found that there were delays in the complaints handling and that there was a failure to keep Miss C updated on developments. Therefore, we upheld Miss C's complaints.

We were also concerned to note that the board said that, according to their access policy, they would not routinely contact another health service provider should they not be able to meet the TTG. However, there is a requirement for boards to contact alternative health service providers when they are not able to meet the TTG. We also made a recommendation to the board in this regard.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise to Miss C for the failure to communicate with her adequately about the date for surgery;
- review its access policy to take into account the requirements in the Patient Rights (Treatment Time Guarantee) (Scotland) Regulations 2012; and
- apologise to Miss C for the failings in the way her complaint was handled.