

SPSO decision report

Case: 201700482, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: health
Subject: appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the board failed to provide him with clinic appointments within a reasonable timescale. He also raised concern that the board failed to provide him with adequate notice of the cancellation and rescheduling of appointments, and he was unhappy with the board's handling of his complaint.

The board did not provide us with records and correspondence about Mr C's appointments, cancellations and rescheduled appointments. We also found that their own complaints file did not include relevant evidence, such as records of actions taken by staff in relation to Mr C's appointments and the initial handling of his complaint. The board did not explain why they offered Mr C an appointment for nine months after the originally scheduled appointment, and seven and a half months after the first rescheduled appointment that was offered (which Mr C told the board he could not attend). As we did not receive this information from the board, we had to assume that relevant records were not made at the time. We found that the board failed to follow their complaints procedure, as they did not give Mr C a written explanation for delays, updates on progress, or indicate when they expected to be able to reply. In addition, the board failed to send a response to Mr C's second complaint email, apparently due to an administrative error. We upheld all of these aspects of Mr C's complaint.

Mr C also complained that the board did not consult him about his availability for rescheduled appointments. We did not find evidence that the board were required to consult Mr C about his availability for rescheduled appointments, so we did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mr C for failing to provide him with adequate notice of the cancellation and rescheduling of appointments, failing to provide rescheduled appointments to him within a reasonable timescale, failing to inform him of the cancellation of a specific appointment, and for handling his complaint unreasonably. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology, available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance>.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Relevant staff should be reminded of the process for dealing with cancelled or reduced clinics, and the necessity of keeping records.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Staff investigating complaints should obtain the actual evidence, in addition to comments from colleagues on such evidence, and include it in their complaints file.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.