

SPSO decision report

Case: 201706214, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about a delay in diagnosing her child's (Child A) kidney condition. Mrs C was concerned that despite several years of symptoms, appropriate investigations to diagnose Child A's condition had not been carried out and that this had resulted in loss of kidney function. Mrs C also considered that the issue could have been identified on an antenatal scan. Mrs C complained to the board but was unhappy with their response to her complaint.

We took independent advice from a consultant paediatrician (a doctor who specialises in child medicine). We found that Child A's condition would now likely be identified during antenatal anomaly scanning but that at the time of Mrs C's pregnancy, there was no requirement for this type of scan to be carried out. We did not find that the diagnosis had been unreasonably missed. We noted that the board had already reflected on this case and now have a lower threshold for referring children for scans where they report pain moving towards the back. We did not uphold this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

In relation to the board's handling of Mrs C's complaint, we found that the board had not addressed her comments about the potential for diagnosing Child A's kidney condition during an antenatal scan. Therefore, we upheld this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mrs C for not addressing the issues raised about prenatal diagnosis in the complaint investigation or explaining why it was not considered reasonable to do so. The apology should meet the standard set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at: www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Issues raised in complaints should be addressed or an explanation provided as to why it is not considered reasonable to do so.