

SPSO decision report

Case: 201808170, Highland NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained about the care and treatment provided to her by the board for a number of symptoms over a period of several months. We took independent advice from a GP, from a consultant in acute medicine, from a gastroenterologist (a physician who specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the stomach and intestines) and from a neurologist (a doctor who specialises in the brain and nervous system). We found that whilst much of the care and treatment provided to Ms C was reasonable, the possibility of Ms C's symptoms being caused by other disorders should have been discussed with her. Therefore, on balance, we upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Ms C for the failure to recognise and discuss the possibility of her symptoms being caused by a functional disorder or chronic fatigue syndrome. The apology should meet the standard set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at: [HYPERLINK "http://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance"](http://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance) www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance .
- Consider carrying out a further review of Ms C's symptoms (should she still wish to have this done) if she is referred to the board via her GP in light of the findings of this investigation.

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

- Staff should be aware of how to recognise and manage functional disorders, including chronic fatigue syndrome.

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.