

SPSO decision report



Case: 202008353, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C was concerned about a number of issues regarding their care and treatment, and that of their child (A), during their pregnancy, A's birth and afterwards. C raised complaints with the board and were dissatisfied by their response. The board's response accepted that there had been issues with aspects of the board's complaint handling and a number of issues with their communication, but did not indicate that the board considered that there had been any issues with C or A's care or treatment.

We took independent advice from qualified advisers with experience of obstetrics, neonatology and midwifery (the medical specialisms for pregnancy, childbirth etc.). We found that, overall, C and A had received reasonable care and treatment from the board and that, where areas for improvement around communication had been identified, reasonable actions had been taken to address these. We did not uphold these parts of C's complaint. We noted that the board had accepted that C had been assigned to an incorrect consultant's waiting list for a post-birth debrief and upheld this complaint. We also noted that the board had appropriately apologised to C for this. However, we considered that the board should have taken steps to minimise the possibility of a similar situation recurring in the future.

In considering the board's response to C's complaints, we found that there were specific areas where the board's response and actions could have been improved. However, taking into account those areas for improvement in complaints handling the board had identified, the apologies provided to C and the specific circumstances of the time C raised their complaints, overall the board responded reasonably to C's complaint. We did not uphold this part of C's complaint.

Recommendations

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

- Steps are taken to minimise the possibility of patients being assigned to incorrect consultant's waiting lists for post-birth debriefs.

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.