

SPSO decision report

Case: 202204688, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained on behalf of their parent (A) about the care and treatment provided by the board. A was scheduled for a hip operation after experiencing increased pain which was affecting their daily function. The operation was cancelled on the day as the anaesthetist was not prepared to go ahead due to the high level of risk associated with the procedure and significant concerns about complications. C complained about the hospital's process which they said caused great distress.

We took independent advice from a registered consultant physician. We found that there was a failure by the surgeon to share their concerns about A's surgery with clinical colleagues in a timely way. There was also a break-down in communication between the key teams involved in the pre-assessment, resulting in failures in process and cancellation of surgery on the day. We also found that there was a lack of coordination in arranging A's discharge home when the operation did not go ahead.

We also found failings in the board's handling of the complaint, such as the complaint not addressing all the issues raised by C. We therefore upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the specific communication and process failings identified in respect of the complaint. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Relevant staff should be aware of the requirements of the complaints handling procedures, particularly with respect to addressing all the elements of a complaint and accuracy of information.

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.