

SPSO decision report



Case: 202405343, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about the care and treatment that their late partner (A) received from the board's gynaecology and oncology services at Glasgow Royal Infirmary. A was admitted to hospital, diagnosed with liver cancer, given two months to live and died. C also complained about the board's handling of their complaint.

We took independent advice from a consultant gynaecologist and a consultant oncologist. We found that there appeared to be no evidence that A had any follow-up appointments with the board until 1 year and 11 months after completion of their cancer treatment, contrary to the west of Scotland cancer network guidelines. We noted that the board had acknowledged that A had a long wait for their gynaecology follow-up appointments, their cancelled appointments were not reappointed within a month, and they had to chase for appointments. We noted that the board had apologised for these failings and indicated that they were taking remedial action to address this. Given the board's failure to follow the guidelines and their repeated cancellation of A's gynaecology appointments, on balance, we upheld the complaint.

C also said that the board's response to their complaint did not give them any option to ask for clarification or to challenge the response. We found that the board failed to follow the NHS Model Complaints Handling Procedure and advise C that a named member of staff was available to clarify any aspect of the response. We, therefore, upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failing identified. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/meaningful-apologies.

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

- The board should follow the WOSCAN CMG's recommendations on follow up appointments for patients with endometrial cancer.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- In their complaint responses, the board should advise complainants that a named member of staff is available to clarify any aspect of the response. We offer SPSO accredited Complaints Handling training. Details and registration forms for our online self-guided Good Complaints Handling course (Stage 1) and our online trainer-led Complaints Investigation Skills course (Stage 2) are available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/training-courses>.

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.