

SPSO decision report

Case: 201303682, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C sustained an injury during spinal surgery and after further surgery his consultant neurosurgeon phoned the spinal injuries unit in the Southern General Hospital and discussed the possibility of Mr C being admitted. When a written referral was made, however, Mr C was refused admission. His MP corresponded with the board about this asking for an explanation and, in responding, the board said that the director of the spinal injuries unit had investigated the complaint.

Mr C then complained to us that the unit had unreasonably altered their decision to accept his referral and that its director had inappropriately been appointed to investigate his complaint. Our investigation found that, although there had clearly been a discussion about Mr C's condition, there was no specific evidence that the unit had agreed to accept the referral during the phone call, and we concluded that there was no evidence that a decision had been altered. Although we did not uphold Mr C's complaints, we found that the initial use of the term 'investigated' in relation to the director's role was misleading, although his actual role (in providing a summary, comments and feedback) was appropriate. We made a recommendation about this.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- alter their standing response wording to ensure that staff involved in providing information and comments as part of the complaints handling process are not referred to as having 'investigated' the complaint.