

SPSO decision report

Case: 201406951, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained to us about his care and treatment during an assessment for psychological therapy. He was seen by a junior clinical psychologist at St John's Hospital to identify what form of treatment he might be suitable for. However, the psychologist was concerned about some of the issues he raised, and referred Mr C for a psychiatric review. Mr C was seen by a junior psychiatrist later that day, and had a home visit the following day from two psychiatric nurses. He was also seen the next day by a consultant psychiatrist. The consultant was satisfied that, while Mr C had disturbing thoughts, he did not have any plans to act on them, and was fully in control of his behaviour. The consultant therefore discharged him from psychiatric services, but noted his referral for psychological treatment. Mr C said that this succession of different assessments by various professionals had been distressing, and had not been necessary.

We took independent advice from a medical adviser who is a psychiatrist. The adviser was satisfied that, given the issues raised by Mr C during his initial consultation, it was reasonable for the psychologist to refer him for psychiatric review. The adviser said that the initial psychiatric consultation had covered some of the same issues as the psychologist had, but in greater detail. Overall, they considered that this consultation was reasonable. They noted the need for some assessments to be carried out over a number of days to assess fluctuations in symptoms. They considered the visit by psychiatric nurses to have been reasonable. They were satisfied that the consultation with the consultant psychiatrist had been reasonable, and had appropriately considered the stability of Mr C's mental health.

We noted the distress that this assessment process had caused Mr C. However, given the assurances of the adviser, we were satisfied that this process was reasonable, and did not uphold the complaint.