

SPSO decision report

Case: 201407354, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: health
Subject: appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C was referred by her GP for her painful right ankle to be reviewed. She complained that she experienced an undue delay in receiving appropriate treatment.

We took independent advice from a consultant orthopaedic and trauma surgeon. We found that Ms C's first appointment for treatment with a foot surgeon was just over 39 weeks after her referral. This was longer than the board's waiting time policy. However, in the meantime, Ms C had been sent on a different treatment pathway by being referred to a podiatrist (a clinician who diagnoses and treats abnormalities of the lower limb), a consultant orthopaedic surgeon and then finally a foot surgeon. She had also refused appointment times that had been offered and had been quite specific about where she would receive treatment. This all affected her waiting time.

We took the view that it would have been more appropriate, given the terms of her referral, for Ms C to have been referred directly to a foot surgeon and, therefore, we upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise for the overall delay in providing a date for surgery; and
- bring the complaint to the attention of those staff who assess referrals of this type for them to reflect on the advice given.