

Scottish Parliament Region: South of Scotland

Case 200503550: Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board

Summary of Investigation

Category

Health: Home Visit; Assessment

Overview

The complainant (Mrs C) raised a number of issues regarding an assessment carried out by a Community Psychiatric Nurse. Mrs C also raised issues over the subsequent investigation of her complaint by Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board.

Specific complaints and conclusions

The complaints which have been investigated are:

- (a) length of time taken of initial assessment (*not upheld*);
- (b) the adequacy of assessment (*not upheld*); and
- (c) the adequacy of investigation into complaint (*not upheld*).

Redress and recommendation

The Ombudsman has no recommendations to make.

Main Investigation Report

Introduction

1. On 14 March 2006, Mrs C lodged her complaint against Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board (the Board) with the Ombudsman. It was apparent from the evidence provided by Mrs C that the complaint had exhausted the Board's complaints procedure. This, therefore, meant that the complaint was eligible to be investigated by the Ombudsman. Mrs C claimed that she had suffered injustice as a result of service failure.

2. The complaints from Mrs C which I have investigated are:

- (a) length of time taken for initial assessment;
- (b) the adequacy of assessment; and
- (c) the adequacy of investigation into complaint.

Investigation

3. In the course of my investigation I reviewed the information provided by Mrs C in support of her complaint. Upon completing my initial review of Mrs C's evidence, I identified the evidence I would require from the Board. I made a written request of the Board for information. Evidence I obtained from the Board included records of the initial assessment and statements from staff members.

4. I have not included in this report every detail investigated but I am satisfied that no matter of significance has been overlooked. Mrs C and the Board were given an opportunity to comment on a draft of this report.

(a) Length of time taken for initial assessment

5. On 17 November 2005, Mrs C was visited by a Community Psychiatric Nurse (Nurse 1) following a referral from Mrs C's GP. The referral was made due to Mrs C suffering from what the GP described as a chaotic eating pattern. Mrs C claimed that Nurse 1 spent only 15 minutes in total with her when conducting the assessment. The Board rejected this claim and provided evidence that Nurse 1 had spent approximately one hour with Mrs C when completing the assessment. The Board confirmed that this version of events has been corroborated by the colleague who assisted Nurse 1 at the visit.

(a) Conclusion

6. In conclusion, given that there are two statements which contradict Mrs C's version of events, I do not uphold this aspect of complaint.

(b) The adequacy of assessment

7. Mrs C claimed that a number of issues raised by herself were not handled adequately by Nurse 1 during the assessment. Mrs C also claimed that during the assessment, she had made it clear to Nurse 1 that she was having suicidal thoughts and Nurse 1's response to this was inadequate. It was alleged that Nurse 1 failed to take this point seriously.

8. The Board's evidence states that Mrs C had mentioned that she had experienced suicidal thoughts in the past, however, they were not present at the time of the assessment. Furthermore, the completed Triage Assessment form does highlight the issue of suicidal thoughts and also self-harming behaviour thus indicating that these matters were taken into consideration by Nurse 1 when assessing Mrs C. The Board explained that the purpose of the initial assessment was to identify the immediate problems regarding Mrs C's eating pattern. The Board confirmed that issues such as self-harming and suicidal thoughts may have been addressed at further consultations had Mrs C continued the treatment.

(b) Conclusion

9. I have reviewed evidence which demonstrates that due consideration was given to the issue of suicidal thoughts and self-harming behaviour at the initial assessment, I do not uphold this aspect of complaint.

(c) The adequacy of investigation into complaint

10. Mrs C complained that the investigation into her complaint by the Board was not adequate. I requested that the Board detail the steps taken in investigating Mrs C's complaint.

11. The Board confirmed that in conducting their investigation they had sought formal statements from relevant staff and also supporting evidence such as the Triage Assessment form from the consultation. The draft response was then checked by relevant managers and passed to the Nursing Director for approval.

(c) Conclusion

12. Having reviewed the process utilised by the Board in investigating the complaint, I am satisfied that the action taken was reasonable and in line with normal policy and procedures for handling complaints I, therefore, do not uphold this aspect of complaint.

28 November 2006

Explanation of abbreviations used

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| Mrs C | The complainant |
| Nurse 1 | Community Psychiatric Nurse who conducted Mrs C's assessment |
| The Board | Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board |