

INWO decision report

Case: 202210712, Greater Glasgow and Clyde
NHS Board



Subject: HSCP - Health \ Patient safety

Summary

C complained to the INWO about a Health and Social Care Partnership's approach to handling stakeholder feedback during the implementation of the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards. (The MAT Standards are new standards for drug treatment in Scotland that aim to reduce drug related harms and risk of death). C was also dissatisfied with the way the Board investigated and responded to their concerns.

As part of our investigation, we considered C's submissions, the Board's investigation file and we made a number of further enquiries to the Board. We reviewed the Board's analysis of the stakeholder feedback gathered for the purpose of demonstrating implementation of the MAT Standards as well as relevant correspondence regarding feedback. Based on this evidence, we concluded that the Board did not fail to take appropriate action in response to the stakeholder feedback. We did not uphold this aspect of C's complaint.

We also reviewed the Board's approach to handling the concern against the requirements of the National Whistleblowing Standards. We identified a number of learning points for the Board, including the need to avoid including personal comments about the whistleblower in the response and maintaining their privacy when informing those involved in the investigation of the outcome. We upheld this aspect of C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for not fully addressing all the issues raised, including unnecessary personal comments about C in the stage 2 responses, and sharing unnecessary information when informing those involved in the investigation of the outcome. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- An investigation should aim to establish all the facts relating to the points raised in the whistleblowing concern. It should be thorough, in proportion to the seriousness of the concern and impartial, so that the organisation can identify any problems and consider what improvements can be made. The investigation must focus on the practices or procedures that are unsafe or inappropriate. It must focus on patient safety, safe working practices and good governance; it must be fair, robust and proportionate to the risks identified. The organisation must also keep other people who were directly involved in the investigation updated on the final outcome, and must tell them about any recommendations or action they have taken as a result of the whistleblowing concern. Any information shared must respect the confidentiality of the whistleblower.