

Complaint case study for publication on Trust website May 2015:

Mrs R wrote to the Trust to raise concerns about a delay in her partner, Mr S, having his ERCP procedure.

Mrs R raised concerns that following Mr S's emergency admission to hospital, there was a delay in undertaking his treatment. Mr S was then discharged with an ERCP procedure (endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography) booked, but despite contacting the hospital, there was no bed available for him to undergo the procedure. He was in pain and an ambulance brought him to Maidstone Hospital that same day. He was transferred to Tunbridge Wells Hospital from Maidstone Hospital, and then two days later, transferred back to Maidstone Hospital to undergo the ERCP.

Mrs R was unhappy that the planned admission could not go ahead because of bed availability, but when Mr S was brought to hospital by ambulance, a bed was made available for him. She was unhappy that the ERCP could not be carried out at Tunbridge Wells Hospital and this meant that Mr S had to be transferred to and from Maidstone hospital for the procedure.

Our findings

This complaint was investigated by the Assistant General Manager and the complaint was not upheld.

Mr S initially presented to the Surgical Assessment Unit with a five week history of stomach pain. Following appropriate investigations, it was felt that he was suffering from obstructive jaundice and would require an ERCP. The next ERCP procedure list was five days away, so Mr S was offered the opportunity to remain an inpatient for relief of his symptoms, but he preferred to go home.

Unfortunately, due to high demands on beds for emergency admissions, the Trust had no option but to cancel the planned admission. Apologies were offered for the inconvenience this caused, but it was explained that it would not have been safe to go ahead without a bed being available.

Later the same day, Mr S was admitted to A&E at Maidstone Hospital as he was feeling unwell and since the blood tests undertaken showed a deterioration, he was transferred to our Tunbridge Wells site as an emergency admission. The next available ERCP list was being carried out at Maidstone Hospital, so Mr S was transferred back there to have the procedure. Apologies were offered for the worry and frustration that this caused.