

SPSO decision report

Case: 201200183, The Golden Jubilee National Hospital

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C, who had heart problems, was to undergo elective (non-urgent) surgery in the hospital to improve the blood flow to his heart to relieve the symptoms of angina (chest pain) he was suffering. His wife (Mrs C) complained that his planned transfer from another hospital for this procedure was cancelled five times. Mr C was eventually transferred, but died late the following evening. Mrs C also complained that the hospital's response to her complaint glossed over the reasons for one of her husband's discharges from hospital and was not consistent with the response from the other hospital.

Our investigation, which included taking independent advice from a medical adviser who is a consultant cardiologist (heart specialist), found that the reasons for the multiple cancellations of Mr C's transfer were all medically based. The adviser was of the view that each of the cancellations was reasonable, based on Mr C's clinical condition at the time. The adviser said that the procedure was designed to relieve chest pain. However, because of Mr C's other serious medical conditions, even if the procedure been carried out during his first admission to hospital it would have been unlikely to have changed the eventual outcome or to have prolonged his life. This is because Mr C's eventual condition would not have been cured, altered or improved by the procedure.

Our investigation also found that the reasons for Mr C's discharge were clear and had been made clear at the time. He was discharged so that another medical condition could be addressed to try to ensure that he was fit enough to undergo the surgical procedure, and we took the view that this was reasonable. Similarly, we found that there was no contradiction in the information provided in the complaint responses. Although we appreciated that this had been a very difficult time for Mrs C and her husband, we were satisfied that the overall care and treatment provided was reasonable.