

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201300118, Highland NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about the medical and nursing care and treatment provided to her late husband (Mr C) under the Liverpool Care Pathway (LCP - a care planning system for dying patients) when he was in Raigmore Hospital. Mr C had suffered a spontaneous intracranial haemorrhage (bleeding within the skull), the effects of which had possibly been magnified by warfarin (a type of medicine that is given to stop clots forming in the blood) that he had, appropriately, been taking.

We took independent advice from one of our medical advisers who explained, after examining Mr C's medical records, that the prospects of any sort of meaningful recovery from such a severe brain injury were non-existent. The records showed that the doctor's conclusion had been that Mr C's condition had deteriorated, and the family had accepted this and that the implementation of the LCP would be appropriate. The adviser said that the principal aims of the LCP were to ensure that patients who were dying were not subjected to unnecessary investigations such as blood tests that would not alter the outcome, but that they would receive all care necessary to maintain their comfort and relieve any distress. In view of this, we found that it had been reasonable to place Mr C on the LCP and then to keep him on it. We also found that the LCP had been implemented appropriately.

In addition, we found that the medical and nursing care records indicated that Mr C received good and entirely appropriate care while he was in hospital. There were also detailed records of discussions with Mrs C and her family. In view of all of this, we did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.