

SPSO decision report

Case: 201302566, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: communication, staff attitude, dignity, confidentiality
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C, who is an advocacy worker, complained to us on behalf of her client (Mrs A) who was concerned about the care and treatment of her late husband (Mr A). After Mr A fell and broke his hip, he had an operation in Monklands Hospital to repair it. That night he climbed out of bed and fell to the floor. He did not complain of any pain at the time, but when he woke in the early morning he complained of pain in his other hip. He was reviewed by a doctor, and an x-ray revealed that he had broken his other hip. Mrs A was told about this at 07:30 that morning. Mr A had another operation that day to repair his second broken hip, and was monitored closely for the rest of the day. The following day, he was found to be confused and was reviewed by a junior doctor. Mrs A was concerned that her husband should have been more closely monitored, that a doctor was not called soon enough, and that she was not informed of his fall until the following morning. She was also unhappy with the level of attention given to her husband's confusion following the second operation. She has said that this was only noted and acted upon after she raised persistent concerns with staff.

We took independent advice on this complaint from one of our advisers, who is an experienced nurse. She said that an appropriate care plan was in place for Mr A, which included the appropriate use of bed rails and that he had been appropriately monitored after both operations. She also considered that after Mr A fell, it was appropriate for staff to delay phoning Mrs A until the morning, as there was no immediate indication that he had been injured in the fall. She also reviewed the evidence in relation to Mr A's confusion after his second operation, and found that the records indicated that nursing staff took appropriate action by alerting doctors to Mr A's confusion. On the basis of this advice, we did not uphold the complaint as we found no evidence of failings in the care and treatment of Mr A.