

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201502620, Forth Valley NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about her mother (Mrs A)'s discharge from Forth Valley Royal Hospital. Mrs A was 82 years old at the time and was admitted with chest pains, later diagnosed as a heart attack. Further to treatment, plans were made to discharge Mrs A but her family were concerned that she remained in poor health. Mrs C said they had alerted staff to Mrs A's breathing difficulties, shivering, leg swelling, lack of appetite and general weakness but were assured that she was fit to go home. Following discharge, Mrs A was readmitted in the early hours of the following morning. She was diagnosed with sepsis and did not recover. She passed away five days later.

Mrs C considered that the signs of sepsis were present prior to Mrs A's discharge and were not detected by staff. The board advised that the results of pre-discharge tests were not consistent with a diagnosis of sepsis. We took independent advice from a consultant in general and geriatric medicine. They noted that Mrs A's symptoms, observations and blood test results were considered prior to discharge and were relatively normal. In particular, they noted that her blood test results were sufficiently normal to allow discharge to proceed. They did not consider that there was any evidence Mrs A was suffering from sepsis at the time and, overall, they considered it reasonable for her to have been discharged. They noted that she was re-admitted a short time later and subsequently died but were not of the view that this could have been reasonably predicted at the time of discharge or that it was due to poor medical care during Mrs A's admission. We did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.