

SPSO decision report

Case: 201507805, Fife NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment received by her husband (Mr A) during an admission to Cameron Hospital for rehabilitation following a spinal injury. She complained about various aspects of nursing care, particularly surrounding the fitting of, and monitoring of time Mr A spent in, his back brace. We took independent advice from a nurse. The adviser considered that this challenging aspect of care was appropriately considered across the multi-disciplinary team and that reasonable action was taken to achieve a suitable balance and ensure Mr A's comfort and dignity were maintained. Overall, the adviser considered that the standard of nursing care provided to Mr A was reasonable and we did not uphold this complaint.

Mrs C also complained about the standard of physiotherapy and occupational therapy care provided to her husband. She felt that Mr A only received a token programme of rehabilitation and also raised concerns about the occupational therapist's input during an assessment of their home prior to discharge. We were advised that the care provided to Mr A during his admission was reasonable. The adviser also noted that Mr A's discharge was complex to coordinate but considered there to be evidence of detailed planning by the multi-disciplinary team, overseen by the occupational therapist, in order to meet the family's needs in this regard. Overall, we concluded that the standard of physiotherapy and occupational therapy care provided to Mr A was reasonable and we did not uphold this complaint.

Finally, Mrs C complained about the communication between staff, and with her and her family. In particular, she complained that the nursing staff responded negatively to her raising concerns about Mr A's treatment. She said that the way she was spoken to by a nurse left her feeling unable to return to the ward to visit her husband. She did not consider that the board had sufficiently addressed her concerns in this regard. While the adviser found that the records demonstrated a reasonable standard of communication, it was recognised that there were significant difficulties in communication between healthcare staff and Mrs C's family, which led to a breakdown in relations. We were satisfied, however, that the board made reasonable efforts to resolve these difficulties and we did not uphold this complaint.