

SPSO decision report

Case: 201708311, Fife NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: admission / discharge / transfer procedures
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained on behalf of her husband (Mr A) about the care and treatment he received. Mr A was admitted to Queen Margaret Hospital for surgery to treat a hernia (where an internal part of the body pushes through a weakness in the muscle or tissue near the belly button). He was discharged home on the same day as his surgery. However, Mr A began to experience pain at home that worsened overnight. Early the next morning, Mr A was taken by ambulance to Victoria Hospital. He was found to have suffered a serious complication from his surgery.

Mrs C complained that Mr A should not have been discharged home after his surgery at Queen Margaret Hospital. We took independent advice from a general and colorectal surgeon (a surgeon who specialises in conditions in the colon, rectum or anus). We found that it was reasonable that Mr A was discharged home, as his did not yet have signs of any complication from the surgery and his recovery was as expected. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

Mrs C also complained that when Mr A arrived at Victoria Hospital, he was not assessed at A&E before he was transferred to the surgical assessment unit. We took independent advice from an emergency medicine consultant. We found the board's process is that where a patient has recently undergone surgery, they are transferred straight to the surgical assessment unit if they are clinically stable. We found that the process was reasonable and safe and it did not cause any undue delay in Mr A's care and treatment. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.