

SPSO decision report

Case: 201800742, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained about the care and treatment her mother (Ms A) received from the board following a referral for the suspicion of cancer.

We took independent advice from a consultant respiratory physician and a consultant radiologist (a specialist in the analysis of the body). We found that the scan guided biopsies (tissue samples) were not carried out by the radiology department within a reasonable length of time and that there was an unreasonable delay in arranging surgical treatment. We also found that it was unreasonable that the report of a scan did not mention the bony lesions (areas of bone that are changed or damaged) and the pulmonary embolism (a clot in the blood vessel that transports blood from the heart to the lungs). Therefore, we upheld Ms C's complaints.

Ms C also complained that the board failed to handle her complaint reasonably. We found that the board's complaint response commented on Ms A's financial difficulty when this was not raised in Ms C's complaint. We upheld this aspect of Ms C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Ms C for failing to carry out the CT guided biopsies within a reasonable length of time; report the bony lesions and the pulmonary embolus in the report of the CT pulmonary angiogram scan; and to ensure that the complaint response only contained information that was relevant to the complaint Ms C raised. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsa.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- The radiology department should carry out CT guided biopsies within a reasonable length of time.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Complaint responses should only contain information that is relevant to the complaint raised.