

SPSO decision report

Case: 202001151, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C's spouse (A) had long term health conditions. A attended a hospital appointment with C in relation to A's health and was told by a clinician that a CT scan (computerised tomography) dating from the previous year showed A had a sticky heart valve (when a valve does not fully open to allow enough blood to flow through). This was the first time that A and C had been told of any heart problem, and A had not undergone any treatment for heart valve problems in the past. Shortly after this, A was examined at hospital and on this occasion found to have a heart murmur. C complained to the board about not being told of the sticky heart valve. In their response, the board said that they could find no evidence in the records of A having been diagnosed with any form of heart problem prior to the detection of a heart murmur.

A later died and following this, C complained to the board about what they considered was a failure to disclose heart problems sooner and provide timely treatment. C was dissatisfied with the board's response to their complaint and asked us to investigate.

We took independent advice from a cardiology adviser. We did not find evidence that the board unreasonably failed to inform A that they had a heart valve condition or that the board unreasonably delayed treating A for a heart valve condition. We therefore did not uphold either complaint.