

SPSO decision report



Case: 202204453, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Admission / discharge / transfer procedures
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained that the board failed to carry out a reasonable assessment of their late parent (A) when they were admitted to hospital. They were also unhappy with the decision to discharge A and said that the board failed to communicate adequately with them and their family during the time A spent in the hospital. C complained that the board's complaint response was not consistent with A's clinical records.

We took independent advice from a consultant in geriatric and general medicine. We found that while a reasonable assessment of A's clinical condition was carried out, the assessment of A's physical condition and the discussion with their family before discharge fell below a reasonable standard, particularly with respect to A's mobility. We also found that communication with A's family fell below a level that they could reasonably expect. Finally, we were critical of the board's complaint response which appeared to be selective in terms of the information provided rather than being objective. Therefore, we upheld C's complaints.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failings identified and provide an explanation to C about why the discharge document mentioned 'urosepsis'. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

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

- The gap between a patient's previous and current abilities should always be assessed and considered when making a decision about discharging the patient. Where a patient's family is involved in their care at home, they should be involved in discussions about the patient's discharge and any follow-up care and treatment.
- Complaint responses should be objective, clear, accurate and address the issues raised.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.