

SPSO decision report



Case: 202306027, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division

Sector: Health

Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis

Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about the standard of care and treatment provided by the board to their late parent (A) during two hospital admissions and the communication around this. C also complained about the way that A was discharged and when they felt that they were unfit to be discharged. A was hard of hearing and a non-English speaker. C said that the failings led to a great deal of mental and physical stress and A's premature death shortly after the second discharge.

We took independent advice from a consultant physician specialising in medicine for older adults. We found that while aspects of the care and treatment were reasonable, there were failings. The board failed to communicate adequately in relation to A's care and treatment. In particular, in relation to the seriousness of A's illness and ensuring that A's family understood that A was at the end of their life, and the lack of an in-person professional translator for A. Finally, we found that A was not discharged in a reasonable way on the second discharge home, that they should have been reviewed by a senior clinician and had all the relevant tests and investigations carried out and reviewed, and that on discharged, should have had all the required support from the community in place to meet their needs. We upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failings identified. 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:

- Patients and their family should be informed of significant treatment events.
- Patients should be discharged when they have been appropriately reviewed by a senior clinician and all relevant tests and investigations, have been carried out and reviewed.
- Patients should be discharged with all the required support from the community in place to meet their clinical needs.
- Patients who have a hearing impairment or do not speak English as a first language (or both) should have appropriate language support to enable them to fully access NHS services in the same way as patients who do not have barriers such as disability and language.

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.