

SPSO decision report



Case: 202404622, Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about the care and treatment the board provided to their late spouse (A). A had a history of heart failure and severe left ventricular systolic dysfunction (LVSD, a severely weakened function in heart pumping) as well as other chronic health conditions.

C complained about the cardiac (heart) care and treatment that A received prior to their death from cardiac failure.

We took independent advice from a consultant cardiologist. We found that clinical aspects of A's care were reasonable; however, the board's communication was unreasonable in relation to a prescription for A's heart medication, an echocardiogram (an image of the heart) and a possible referral to a specialist heart failure service. We upheld this part of C's complaint on the basis of unreasonable communication.

C also complained about how the board handled their complaint. We found that the board's handling of the complaint was reasonable. We did not uphold this part of C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failings identified by this investigation. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/meaningful-apologies.

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

- Discussions and outcomes from multi-disciplinary team meetings should be clearly documented in medical records and patient notes.

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.