

SPSO decision report

Case: 201101242, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment; diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, action taken by body to remedy, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained to the board about aspects of the care and treatment provided to her late husband (Mr C) both in hospital and by the Out of Hours Service (OOHS). Mr C had been suffering from cancer. When he became unwell with abdominal pain and diarrhoea, Mrs C contacted the OOHS and Mr C was taken to hospital.

Mrs C complained that Mr C should have been taken to a different hospital, and that he was given inadequate clinical treatment and pain relief. She also complained about delays in diagnosis and treatment; poor communication and unhelpful attitudes from staff; the time taken for an OOHS doctor to arrive at the house and that the doctor was uncaring.

We did not uphold the majority of Mrs C's complaints. We established that, as an emergency ambulance was called, it was appropriate for Mr C to be taken to the hospital where he was treated. After taking advice from one of our medical advisers, we also found that while Mr C was in hospital he received appropriate clinical treatment, staff carried out appropriate investigations, and the general level of communication was adequate.

We upheld two of Mrs C's complaints as we found that for a period Mr C's pain was not managed appropriately; and that there had been a fifteen minute delay by the OOHS doctor in arriving for the home visit.

We did not make recommendations on this complaint as the board have already taken action to remedy what went wrong. The board have apologised for a breakdown in communication by the nurses in regards to pain relief and staff at the OOHS have apologised for the delay in their doctor making a house call.