

SPSO decision report

Case: 201102400, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: hygiene, cleanliness and infection control
Outcome: some upheld, action taken by body to remedy, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C was admitted to hospital for a gastroscopy (a procedure in which a thin, flexible tube is used to look inside the stomach) under general anaesthetic. She waited in the day room until she was allocated a bed. During this time a member of staff discussed confidential information with her while she was with other patients. Mrs C complained that the discussion should have taken place privately.

When Mrs C returned to the ward after the procedure, she went to the toilet to find bedpans piling up and their contents spilling on the floor of the only cubicle available. Nursing staff responded immediately when Mrs C raised the matter, but she was still unhappy and complained to us.

Mrs C later underwent a further test. She complained that staff told her that the consultant would give her the results of the test within a few days (or her GP would, within two weeks) and that the board failed to do either. The consultant wrote to Mrs C within five and a half weeks with the results.

We found that the board should not have discussed personal medical information with Mrs C in front of other patients or left bedpans piling up in the ward toilet, and upheld both complaints. However, we did not make any recommendations as the board had already taken action to address these failings. We did not find that the time the board took to provide the results of the test was unreasonable.