

SPSO decision report

Case: 201201689, Orkney NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C is an advocate for the sister of the late Mr A. Ms C complained that the care and treatment provided by the board to Mr A was unreasonable. Around 15 months after being diagnosed with cancer, Mr A was given the all-clear. However, within two months, his symptoms had returned. Initially, tests suggested that the original cancer had returned, but following a liver biopsy (where a sample of tissue is taken for examination in the laboratory), Mr A was found to have a second type of cancer, incurable small cell lung cancer, which had already spread to his liver. Mr A died some three weeks later.

Our investigation, which included taking independent advice from a medical adviser who is a consultant haematologist (a specialist in disorders of the blood), found that once Mr A had been referred to the board his care and treatment had been reasonable. Mr A had a rare form of cancer - Mantle Cell Lymphoma (MCL - cancer of the white cells that help the body fight infection). Mr A was treated for MCL by the board and by a specialist team in another NHS board area.

The adviser reviewed Mr A's treatment against guidelines issued by the British Committee for Standards in Haematology which were published in 2012. Although this guidance was provided after Mr A's treatment, the adviser said that his treatment complied with these standards and was, therefore, reasonable. The adviser considered that overall, the care and treatment provided to Mr A by the board was reasonable and timely.