

SPSO decision report

Case: 201301769, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained on behalf of his father (Mr A) who had suffered a stroke following a bleed in his brain which required specialist surgery. He was left with dense weakness in his left side with no active movement. Mr A was an in-patient at Raigmore Hospital for a number of months while he underwent rehabilitation in their stroke unit. When he was discharged, Mr A received physiotherapy at York Day Hospital. He was later seen by a consultant in stroke rehabilitation medicine and a specialist physiotherapist. Mr A also received other physiotherapy in the community. Mr C was unhappy with the range, intensity and frequency of the physiotherapy that Mr A received and complained that the board had failed to provide appropriate rehabilitation following his stroke. The board considered that the rehabilitation they provided was reasonable.

After taking independent advice from a medical adviser who is a consultant in stroke medicine and rehabilitation, we found that the clinical rehabilitation treatment that Mr A had received was appropriate. The advice highlighted an area where communication with the family could have been better but, overall, we considered this element of Mr A's care to be reasonable. We also took independent advice from a physiotherapist specialising in neurological rehabilitation and acute neurology (the science of the nerves and the nervous system, especially of the diseases affecting them). Overall, the range, intensity and frequency of Mr A's physiotherapy was found to be reasonable and the adviser considered that a holistic approach had been taken in relation to his treatment. The physiotherapy advice highlighted a single area of concern where there was no record that an issue identified during an assessment at York Day Hospital was monitored. After taking all the information about Mr A's rehabilitation care and treatment into account, we did not uphold Mr C's complaint but made a recommendation to the board to ensure that lessons are learned from the advisers' comments.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- draw the comments of the medical adviser on communication and the physiotherapy adviser on best practice to the attention of relevant staff.