

SPSO decision report

Case: 201303648, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that staff at Perth Royal Infirmary refused him permission to take his elderly mother (Mrs A) out of hospital on a specific occasion, and about the board's handling of his complaint.

We looked at the board's file on Mr C's complaint and at Mrs A's medical records, and took independent advice from one of our medical advisers. Where there are differing accounts of what was said or what took place during a particular event or incident, it can be difficult to prove what actually happened. Although this does not mean we believe one account over another, given the differing accounts of what happened on the day Mr C complained about, we were unable to resolve exactly what was said and so we based our findings on the written records. We found that the medical and nursing records were consistent and provided sufficient evidence to allow us to conclude that it was reasonable in the circumstances for staff to advise against Mrs A leaving hospital that day, taking into account her state of health, their concerns and their responsibility to care for Mrs A.

The board's file on Mr C's complaint showed that they conducted a reasonable investigation by contacting relevant staff and referring to Mrs A's medical records. Their letter to Mr C accurately reflected Mrs A's medical records and, although it could have contained additional information that Mr C might have found helpful, it was reasonable in the circumstances. There was a delay in the board dealing with Mr C's complaint, but we found that they had accepted this, explained why, and apologised to Mr C.