

SPSO decision report

Case: 201400075, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: health
Subject: communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C visited the Western Infirmary, Glasgow as she was feeling unwell. She complained about the attitude of a doctor who spoke to her, and the care and treatment they provided. Mrs C also complained about the board's response to her complaint.

Mrs C's account of her conversation with the doctor was different from that of the doctor, and of a nurse who was also present. Where there are differing accounts of what was said or what happened in a particular situation, it can be difficult to prove what actually happened without independent evidence. In such cases, we normally base our findings on written records. In this case, the records noted it was a difficult conversation, and also noted a version of events contrary to what Mrs C told us had happened. We could not resolve this aspect of Mrs C's complaint given the differing accounts, although we pointed out that this does not mean that we believed one account over another.

We looked at the board's file on Mrs C's complaint and at her medical records, and took independent advice from one of our medical advisers. Our adviser's view, which we accepted, was that the care and treatment provided by the doctor was adequate in the circumstances, and consistent with usual practice and relevant guidelines.

In dealing with Mrs C's complaint, the board looked at her medical records and obtained statements from the doctor and the nurse, and their response was consistent with this information. The board's response acknowledged Mrs C's reported experience and apologised if problems with communication had made an already distressing situation worse. We were satisfied that, in the circumstances, the board's response to Mrs C's complaint was adequate. We did not uphold Mrs C's complaints.