

SPSO decision report

Case: 201403703, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: nurses / nursing care
Outcome: some upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that the board had failed to carry out appropriate investigations to identify the cause of her severe weight loss, decline in cognition and reduced mobility, when she was admitted to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh on two occasions. She said that staff only seemed to be interested in her brain injury, which was already being dealt with by staff at another hospital. We took independent advice on this part of her complaint from one of our medical advisers, who is a consultant in geriatric and general medicine.

We found that staff in the hospital had carried out appropriate levels of investigations and had made appropriate referrals to other specialities. They had considered Mrs C's condition and problems appropriately and there was no evidence that they focused unreasonably on one part of her health and failed to address others. Other aspects of her care were reasonable and, consequently, we did not uphold the complaint.

Mrs C also complained that staff had failed to provide her with an appropriate level of nursing care. We obtained independent advice from a nursing adviser on this complaint and found that some aspects of her nursing care had been reasonable. However, Mrs C had developed a pressure ulcer whilst in the hospital and we found that she should have received better care in relation to this. There should also have been further discussion with Mr and Mrs C about her personal hygiene needs. In addition, her food charts had not been fully completed. We upheld this aspect of Mrs C's complaint. That said, we did not make any recommendations to the board, as we found that they had apologised to Mrs C for these failings, and we had made recommendations to the board that addressed these failings in similar cases previously.