

SPSO decision report

Case: 201503161, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr and Mrs C made a complaint on behalf of their son (Mr A) who had been diagnosed with epilepsy some years ago. Mr A had been seizure free for a number of years but in July 2014 began to experience seizures again. He was admitted to Monklands Hospital on three occasions in November and December 2014 and Mr and Mrs C complained that he was not cared for or treated reasonably. They also said that communication with him was poor.

We took independent advice from consultants in emergency medicine and in neurology and we found that at each of Mr A's admissions, emergency clinicians treated him reasonably and appropriately. He was examined and assessed and appropriate tests were undertaken. He was released from hospital with advice to contact his GP and for psychiatric follow-up. The third time Mr A went to A&E, he was admitted for observation. He was exhibiting bizarre behaviour and suffering from depressive symptoms. However, it was established that although there was clearly documented evidence to confirm that Mr A was emotionally ill, it was accepted that he was suffering epileptic seizures and no definitive tests were requested to refute or deny this. Instead doctors concentrated on altering his medication. For this reason, Mr and Mrs C's complaints about Mr A's care and treatment were upheld. However, we did not find any evidence to suggest that communication with him had been poor.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- make Mr A a formal apology to recognise our findings about care and treatment;
- ensure that members of the neurology team involved in Mr A's care are familiar with the appropriate national guidance; and
- ensure that neurology staff involved in Mr A's case consider it at their next formal appraisal.