

SPSO decision report

Case: 201608890, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that the board failed to ensure a reasonable standard of communication with herself and her late husband (Mr A). Mr A had been diagnosed with cancer, and Mrs C complained that the communication about his diagnosis, prognosis and treatment options was poor and that, as such, Mrs C and Mr A were unable to make an informed decision about the treatment options offered.

We took independent advice from an oncology (cancer) nurse and from an adviser who specialises in the care of the elderly. We found that board staff discussed treatment options and potential risks in a reasonable way, and that the records suggested that Mr A understood the nature of his condition and treatment options. We also found that staff followed the relevant General Medical Council Guidance in this respect, and that they acted reasonably in respecting Mr A's stated preferences for information and his decision-making ability. We did not uphold the complaint.