

SPSO decision report

Case: 201703049, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: health
Subject: admission / discharge / transfer procedures
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C raised concerns about the way hospital nursing staff arranged a care package with the council for her late father (Mr A) upon his discharge from Glasgow Royal Infirmary. Mr A's discharge from hospital was delayed as Ms C was told that the care providers were closed over the holidays. After being discharged no carers arrived to assist Mr A. Ms C contacted the hospital but was told nothing could be done as it was the weekend and there was no out-of-hours service. Ms C complained that the board failed to ensure that a package of care was in place for Mr A on his discharge from hospital and that she was not provided with an out-of-hours emergency phone number for the care provider.

We considered that there was a failure to reasonably ensure that the council was contacted to put a package of care in place. We found that there was contradictory information regarding how the package of care had been arranged and who within the nursing staff had arranged it with the council. It was not possible to determine with any certainty who arranged this and what was arranged. We upheld this aspect of the complaint.

We also found that nursing staff were not aware of the fact that an out-of-hours number was available and could be called at the weekend and on public holidays. We found that it was possible that Mr A could have been provided with a package of care over the holidays or at the weekend if the out-of-hours service had been contacted by the nursing staff or if Ms C had been provided with the number. We upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Ms C for failing to ensure that a care package was arranged with the council for Mr A's discharge from hospital.
- Apologise to Ms C for not calling the out-of-hours phone number for packages of care and for not providing Ms C with this number. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on making an apology, available at www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- All nursing staff should be aware of the requirement to record who contacted the council to arrange a package of care; the name of the person this was arranged with; the date the care package would start and any discussion regarding the care the patient would require at home.
- All nursing staff should be aware of the out-of-hours contact phone number for packages of care for public holidays and weekends. Staff should contact this number where appropriate to do so. The number should be provided to families where appropriate to do so.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations

we have made on this case by the deadline we set.