

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201703260, Forth Valley NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** some upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment given to her late father (Mr A) after his GP referred him to the board for neurology treatment. Mr A had his first neurology appointment and the following month was diagnosed with a rare type of cancer. He was told that he would require no treatment. However, three months later he attended the emergency department at Forth Valley Royal Hospital with chest and abdominal pain and was admitted to the hospital. Mrs C complained about Mr A's care and treatment by both nursing and clinical staff, and about the lack of information she and her family were given. Mr A died some weeks later, and Mrs C said that the family had been unaware of the seriousness of Mr A's illness and its prognosis and, as such, they were shocked and unprepared for his death.

We took independent advice from consultants in emergency medicine and haematology (medicine of the blood) and from a registered nurse. We found that Mr A's emergency treatment had been reasonable and appropriate and that he was assessed and managed properly. Afterwards, when Mr A was admitted to the ward, the approach to his illness was watchful waiting. We found that his death could not have been anticipated. For these reasons we did not uphold the complaints about the care and treatment given to Mr A by clinical staff.

We did find that there had been some failures in his nursing care and that there were gaps and inconsistencies in his medical notes, and so we upheld Mrs C's complaint about nursing care. However, we noted that the board had already apologised and taken action with regards to these failings, and therefore we made no further recommendations in this regard.

While Mrs C was unhappy about the level of information given to her family, we were satisfied that they had been kept informed of Mr A's deteriorating condition, but that his imminent death could not have been foretold. On balance, we did not uphold this part of the complaint.