

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201704235, Lanarkshire NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C, who is a patient adviser, complained on behalf of her client (Mr B), who was unhappy about the care and treatment provided to his mother (Mrs A) at Hairmyres Hospital. Mrs A experienced a stroke and was assessed in the emergency department before being transferred to a medical ward. A week following her admission to the ward, Mrs A was admitted to a specialist stroke ward. Soon after the transfer, she experienced a further stroke and died a number of days later.

Mr B complained that there had been a delay in assessing and treating Mrs A in the accident and emergency department. We took independent advice from a consultant geriatrician (a doctor who specialises in medicine of the elderly) with experience in stroke care. We found that the records showed that Mrs A was assessed almost immediately following admission and that a scan was arranged promptly. We did not find evidence that there was an unreasonable delay in assessing and treating Mrs A, and we did not uphold this part of Ms C's complaint.

Mr B was also concerned about the care provided on the medical ward. We found that the board had apologised to Mr B for the delay in transferring Mrs A to a stroke ward. We considered that it was unreasonable that Mrs A was not transferred to a stroke ward sooner. While we considered that the general medical care provided was reasonable, we were critical that Mrs A did not receive the benefit of specialist stroke unit care sooner. We upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Finally, Mr B was unhappy with the level of communication with the family. We found limited evidence of staff communicating with the family in the period following Mrs A's admission and prior to her deterioration. We, therefore, upheld this aspect of Ms C's complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mr B and his family for the lack of communication in the period following Mrs A's admission and prior to her deterioration. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsa.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance](http://www.spsa.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance).

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

- Stroke patients requiring admission to hospital should be admitted promptly to a stroke unit staffed by a co-ordinated multi-disciplinary team with a special interest in stroke care, in accordance with Scottish Clinical Guidelines.
- Medical staff should be mindful of the needs of family members/ significant others of the patient, as described in Scottish Clinical Guidelines, and ensure that there is adequate communication.

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.