

SPSO decision report

Case: 201800972, Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: nurses / nursing care
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained about the nursing care provided to her father (Mr A) at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary. Ms C raised a number of concerns including:

- Mr A having suffered a fall that resulted in a wound to his arm;
- the suitability of his diet;
- his developing of a pressure ulcer;
- him not seeing a dietician and;
- poor record-keeping, specifically the failure to record her father's fall.

We took independent advice from a nurse. We found that risk assessments about the risk of developing a pressure ulcer and being nutritionally compromised had not been completed correctly. This resulted in Mr A not receiving adequate pressure ulcer prevention interventions and being assessed at a lower risk of being nutritionally compromised than he should have been. We also found that important records relating to fluid intake and weight were not kept up to date and that the board failed to follow their policy when they became aware of Mr A's fall. We considered the care and treatment Mr A received was unreasonable and upheld this complaint.

Ms C also complained about the board's responses to her complaints. Ms C was concerned about the tone of the board's response, whether the response reasonably addressed the complaints she raised, the time taken to respond and the efforts to communicate the response when it was clear Mr A was in the final days of his life. We found that the tone of the response had been reasonable but not all of the issues raised had been responded to and that some of those that were, were unreasonable. We found that the response had been provided within a reasonable timescale but the board had not acknowledged Ms C's complaints as they should have. We found that it was unreasonable for the board to have refused to read their decision letter, which was awaiting a final signature, to Ms C over the telephone so she could communicate it to Mr A before he died. Therefore, we upheld this complaint.

Recommendations