

SPSO decision report



Case: 201801523, Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the treatment her mother (Mrs A) received when she attended the emergency department at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary having experienced a fall, and loss of mobility in her legs. Mrs A was discharged from hospital the same day. The following day, Mrs A was unable to mobilise and was admitted to hospital, where it was later discovered that she had suffered a stroke. Mrs C was unhappy that Mrs A was discharged, and complained that the opportunity for mitigating treatment for Mrs A's stroke and for further observation was lost. Mrs C said Mrs A had been visited at home by her GP the week earlier and that the GP said Mrs A might have had a slight stroke. Mrs C was unhappy that Mrs A's GP had not been consulted.

We took independent advice from a medical adviser. We found that the medical treatment Mrs A received was reasonable, and that, on the basis of tests appropriately carried out, stroke was not expected as the cause of Mrs A's mobility problems. We considered that, in the circumstances, stroke mitigating treatment would not have been appropriate and would not have altered the outcome for Mrs A. Therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

Mrs C also complained about the board's handling of her complaint. We found that Mrs C's complaint was not acknowledged or responded to within the correct timescale. We found that the board had already acknowledged these shortcomings, had apologised, and had explained the action they were taking to address them. Mrs C also raised some issues that were not addressed in the board's response. We found that a clearer explanation could have been given for the reasons for Mrs A's discharge. Therefore, we upheld this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.