

SPSO decision report

Case: 201802018, Golden Jubilee National Hospital
Sector: health
Subject: communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained on behalf of her husband (Mr A). Mrs C said Mr A had undergone an operation on his heart, which they had believed would be routine and uncomplicated. Mr A suffered serious complications during the surgery, resulting in a long period of recuperation and life altering consequences. Mrs C said they accepted that what had happened was a recognised risk of the surgery, however, she complained that Mr A had not been provided with adequate information during the consent process. Mrs C felt her complaint had been poorly handled, and although the board had apologised to Mr A, Mrs C was unhappy with this response.

We took independent medical advice. We found that Mr A was not provided with sufficient information during the complaints process. The advice also stated that the board needed to ensure that consent was taken early enough to allow patients to consider properly the potential complications and risks associate with their surgery. We found that the board's response to the complaint was reasonable in terms of practical solutions to the failings identified, but that they had not fully accepted responsibility for the failings, which devalued the apologies they offered. We upheld both aspects of Mrs C's complaint.

Recommendations