

SPSO decision report



Case: 201802039, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the clinical and nursing care and treatment his late wife (Mrs A) received during two admissions to Vale of Leven Hospital (VOLH) and the clinical care and treatment she received during her admission to Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) when she was transferred there from VOLH.

We took independent advice from a consultant in acute medicine and a nursing adviser. We considered that the overall clinical care and treatment Mrs A received during her first admission to VOLH was reasonable and that appropriate assessments and investigations were carried out. However, we found that during her second admission there was a failure to carry out a medical review following an increase in Mrs A's National Early Warning Score (NEWS). NEWS is a tool used to determine the severity of a patient's condition and to highlight any deterioration. We also found that there was a failure to recheck Mrs A's NEWS within six hours. We found that, had this been done, it may have alerted staff to how unwell Mrs A was and allowed staff to speak to Mr C. We considered that the failure to respond appropriately to the elevated NEWS and the failure in relation to the communication with Mr C was unreasonable and we upheld this aspect of the complaint.

In relation to the clinical care and treatment given to Mrs A during her admission to the RAH, we found that this was reasonable and we did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

In terms of the nursing care that Mrs A received at VOLH, we found that overall the nursing care and treatment had been reasonable. All reasonable assessments were carried out, including a falls assessment and the medical records were comprehensive and of a standard that met the National Midwifery Council guidance. However, we also found that there was no documentation within the medical records of the rationale for nursing staff not following NEWS guidance. In these circumstances we upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mr C for failing to provide Mrs A with reasonable clinical and nursing care and treatment at VOLH. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets

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

- Relevant staff should ensure they are able to recognise and respond to elevated NEWS in line with NEWS guidance.
- Relevant staff should be mindful of NEWS guidance and ensure that they document the rationale for not following the guidance.