

SPSO decision report

Case: 201803899, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Miss C complained about the care and treatment provided to her late mother (Mrs A) prior to her death. Mrs A was admitted to Hairmyres Hospital after having a fall and developing chest pain. Miss C had a power of attorney (POA, a legal document appointing someone to act or make decisions for another person) in respect of her mother.

Miss C complained that the POA was not appropriately taken into account; communication in relation to Mrs A's deterioration was unreasonable; and the nursing care and treatment provided to Mrs A was unreasonable.

The board in response to the complaint carried out a local review of Mrs A's care and also held a debrief action plan meeting, following the local review.

We took independent advice from a consultant geriatrician (a doctor who specialises in medicine of the elderly) and a nursing adviser. We found that the POA was respected and there was no indication it was disregarded.

In relation to communication concerning Mrs A's deterioration, the clinical records showed that medical staff engaged with Miss C frequently to discuss Mrs A's condition, symptoms and how these were being managed. There was also evidence of frequent and detailed discussions between Miss C and clinical staff at the point at which Mrs A's condition began to deteriorate. We, therefore, found that communication was of a reasonable standard.

Miss C raised a number of issues with regards to Mrs A's nursing care. Our investigation confirmed that the shortcomings identified within the local review would not have had an impact upon Mrs A's condition and subsequent deterioration. Whilst we recognised the board had apologised for a number of aspects of Mrs A's nursing care, overall, we considered that Mrs A received care of a reasonable standard. We considered that the local review and work carried out by the board was thorough and showed Miss C's complaint was taken seriously.

As a result, we did not uphold Miss C's complaints.