

SPSO decision report

Case: 201806450, Highland NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C, who works for an advocacy and support agency, complained on behalf of a family about the care and treatment that their relative (Mr A) received from the board. Mr A was admitted to Raigmore Hospital with endocarditis (an infection of the inner lining of the heart). He was discharged home for out-patient parenteral antibiotic therapy (where antibiotics are given to a patient in their own home). Mr A's condition worsened and he died a few weeks later. Ms C complained about Mr A's medical care and treatment, and that he was not medically fit to be discharged home.

We took independent advice from a cardiologist (specialists in the heart and blood vessels) and from a nurse. We found that Mr A's condition was diagnosed in a timely manner and he was given appropriate treatment. We also found that it was reasonable that Mr A was discharged home, as there was an appropriate plan to continue his treatment at home.

Ms C complained about the communication with Mr A's family. We found that the medical and nursing records showed evidence of appropriate communication with Mr A's family.

Ms C further complained that Mr A was discharged home without appropriate care planning and an appropriate care package. We found that there was appropriate multi-disciplinary care planning for Mr A's discharge home.

Ms C also complained about the board's complaints handling; in particular, that there was a delay in their response and its tone lacked empathy. We considered that as it was a complex complaint, it was reasonable that the investigation took longer than usual and regular updates were provided. We did not consider the tone was inappropriate.

We did not uphold Ms C's complaints.