SPSO decision report

Case: **201808371, Borders NHS Board**
Sector: Health
Subject: admission / discharge / transfer procedures
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that the board failed to discharge her late husband (Mr A) in a reasonable way. After a period of admission to Borders General Hospital, staff planned Mr A's discharge which was discussed with Mrs C. Mrs C said that staff unreasonably failed to fully consider her concerns about Mr A's discharge and to record these in Mr A's clinical records in a reasonable way. As a result, the couple struggled to cope when Mr A was discharged home and he was readmitted to hospital the following week.

We took independent advice from a nurse. We found that while the decision to discharge Mr A was reasonable, staff communication did not meet Mrs C or Mr A's needs. It would have been reasonable for staff to have fully discussed (and recorded) their concerns about discharge with Mrs C and the consultant responsible for Mr A's care during his hospital admission beforehand. We also found that Mrs C's concerns about Mr A's discharge home were not recorded and the board gave inaccurate information during the complaint process about a meeting Mrs C had with staff. Therefore, we upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mrs C for the failings in communication. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

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

- Feedback the findings of our investigation in relation to communication to relevant staff for them to reflect on.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Feedback the findings of our investigation in relation to complaints handling to relevant staff for them to reflect on.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.