

SPSO decision report

Case: 201902832, Western Isles NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained on behalf of their client (B) in relation to the care and treatment provided to B's partner (A) whilst A was a patient at Western Isles Hospital.

C complained that the board failed to provide A with reasonable care and treatment whilst A was a patient in the hospital. In particular, C is concerned that venous thromboembolism (referring to blood clots in the veins) testing (VTE) was not carried out and that there was a delay in coagulation screening (screening laboratory tests which allows an initial broad categorization of haemostatic problems). C considered that if reasonable care and treatment had been provided, A may not have died. C also believed that the board did not reasonably respond to their complaint about this matter.

The board noted that whilst a VTE assessment was not performed, and there was a delay in coagulation screening, this would not have altered A's clinical management or have changed the outcome, as A was extremely ill. The board stated that they considered they had reasonably responded to C's complaint.

We took independent advice from an appropriately qualified adviser who determined that although the overall care and treatment offered to A was reasonable, there was learning for the board.

We found that the board had failed to conduct a VTE assessment and had failed to administer a prophylactic dose of heparin on the evening of A's admission which was unreasonable. However, even if a VTE assessment had been carried out, and a prophylactic dose of heparin given, it would not have altered the clinical outcome in this case. We also found that the board's reason for a delay in coagulation screening was reasonable. We, therefore, did not uphold this complaint. Furthermore, we found that the board had reasonably responded to C's complaint. We identified learning for the board which was provided by way of feedback.