

SPSO decision report



Case: 202300410, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C, an advocacy worker, complained on behalf of A about the care and treatment they received from the board. A had been referred to the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) department when they noticed a growth on their neck. A was diagnosed with a positive squamous cell cancer (type of cancer that starts as a growth of cells on the skin) in their left tonsil which had spread to their neck lymph nodes. C complained about the standard of communication from the ENT department and a failure to provide appropriate treatment which they considered led to A's terminal diagnosis.

The board provided an overview of the care and treatment provided and were satisfied that appropriate care was provided. Due to the metastatic nature (spread) of A's cancer, the only treatment available was palliative. The board also noted there was regular communication with A and they were copied into letters that were sent to A's GP.

We took independent advice from a consultant ENT surgeon. We found that the clinical decision making with regards to treatment for A's cancer was appropriate and clearly set out in the records. While we recognised that A may have been under the impression that their cancer had been successfully treated, we were satisfied that the records documented detailed discussions which took place between clinical staff and A on multiple occasions regarding their diagnosis and treatment plan. We acknowledged it was possible that A may not have understood the complex and technical terminology used, however overall, we did not find that the clinical team failed to communicate with A. As such, we did not uphold C's complaints.