

SPSO decision report

Case: 201304452, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment provided to her daughter (Miss A) by the board's out-of-hours (OOH) service at St John's Hospital. Mrs C said that they failed to diagnose that Miss A had pneumonia (a lung infection) over the course of three visits. She told us that initially staff had failed to recognise that Miss A was seriously ill and she was sent home with misleading advice about how to care for Miss A. Mrs C also said that the doctor she saw on her final visit to the OOH service was dismissive of her concerns and her daughter had only been admitted to the children's ward because Mrs C had insisted that Miss A receive a second opinion.

Mrs C also complained that once on the children's ward, staffing levels were inadequate and this compromised the care provided to Miss A. Miss A's condition had continued to deteriorate and she was transferred to a children's hospital where she was treated as an in-patient for three weeks before she was discharged. Mrs C said Miss A had been traumatised by the experience and that she had required counselling to overcome her fear of hospitals and doctors.

We took independent advice from one of our medical advisers and a nursing adviser. The medical adviser said the medical records showed that the assessment Miss A received at each visit met national guidelines for the care of children with a fever. He said staff had recognised the severity of her condition and provided the appropriate treatment. There was no evidence to show that the doctor Mrs C complained about acted inappropriately. The nursing adviser said that the records for Miss A's stay in the children's ward were comprehensive, and provided a clear record of her care. We found no evidence that her care was substandard.