

SPSO decision report

Case: 201704015, Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained about the care and treatment her mother (Mrs A) had received in Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary and Castle Douglas Hospital. She was transferred to these hospitals after having surgery on her brain, which left her with quadriplegia (paralysis of all four limbs).

We took independent advice from a consultant geriatrician (a doctor who specialises in medicine of the elderly) and a nursing adviser. In relation to Ms C's complaint about the care provided to Mrs A, we did not uphold the complaint, as we found that:

staff had assessed Mrs A in detail after her transfer and there was no evidence of a negative or palliative approach to her care;

a detailed physiotherapy assessment was carried out promptly the day after her transfer and this was followed by regular sessions with physiotherapists;

Mrs A's care in relation to alerting staff and consuming meals had been reasonable;

it was reasonable that Mrs A did not receive counselling, as there was no clear indication for this in the observations of staff, or requests from Mrs A or her family; and

the level of care provided to Mrs A in relation to massage, physiotherapy and bodily movement was reasonable.

Ms C also complained that the board did not provide reasonable treatment to Mrs A following her admission. We found that there was evidence of a comprehensive assessment of Mrs A's needs and specific attempts to provide care and rehabilitation for her in both hospitals. The prescription of medication, based on the assessments carried out, was reasonable even if it did cause some sedation as a side-effect. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

Finally, Ms C complained that the board unreasonably instructed staff not to talk to her. We found that it had been reasonable for staff to propose a contact time for Ms C every day. This meant that rather than deal with a number of calls from Ms C, staff could give a focussed update. We did not uphold this complaint.