

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201801126, Borders NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained about the overall care and treatment given to his late father (Mr A) while he was a patient in Borders General Hospital.

Mr A was elderly and had a history of acute kidney injury and fluid overload. He was admitted to hospital with gastroenteritis (inflammation of the lining of the stomach). During his stay, clinicians experienced difficulty in getting his fluid balance right between heart failure and fluid overload, and his poor kidney function and fluid intake. When he was considered fit, Mr A was discharged home; however, he was admitted to hospital again the next day. After his second admission he was discharged home, and while the high risks of this were discussed, Mr A was keen to go home. He returned home but again required to be hospitalised the next day with increasing confusion and shortage of breath. Mr A's condition continued to deteriorate and a few days later he died. Mr C was unhappy with the medical and nursing care. He said that Mr A's condition was often unkempt and he had pressure ulcers.

We found that Mr A's medical care and treatment had been reasonable and given appropriately in response to his presenting symptoms. Both times he had been discharged, he was fit. Therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

In relation to nursing care, we found that Mr A's nursing notes were not of the required standard. Similarly, relevant standards in relation to the prevention and management of pressure ulcers were not followed by nursing staff. Therefore, we upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mr C for the failure to deliver Health Improvement Scotland standards appropriately. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [HYPERLINK "http://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance" www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance](http://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance) .

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

- Nursing staff should be fully aware of, and apply, Health Improvement Scotland standards for care of older people in hospital 2015.
- Nursing staff should be fully aware of, and apply, Health Improvement Scotland standards for the prevention and management of pressure ulcers 2016.