

SPSO decision report

Case: 201902674, Highland NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C, a support and advocacy worker, complained on behalf of their client (B) about the care and treatment provided to B's spouse (A). A received a diagnosis of lung cancer that had spread to their brain and neck. A was discharged home with anticoagulant injections (medicine to prevent blood clots) that B agreed to administer whilst further treatment and care was awaited. A subsequently underwent a course of radiotherapy and physiotherapy before being admitted to hospital where they died the following day.

C complained about the treatment A received. We took independent advice from a consultant physician and a nurse. We found that it was reasonable for A to have had a consultation that B thought was unnecessary and that, while a definitive decision could not be reached on whether relevant staff had failed to recognise deterioration in A, no opportunities had been missed in A's treatment. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

C complained about the care A received. We found that reasonable follow-up support was either provided or offered to A and B. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

C complained about specific communication between the board and B and A. We found no evidence indicating unreasonable communication on the board's part. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

Finally, C complained about the board's response to the complaint submitted on B's behalf. We found that the response had been reasonable and, therefore, did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.