

SPSO decision report



Case: 201905597, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: Health
Subject: Nurses / nursing care
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C, an advocate, complained on behalf of their client (A). The complaint related to an incident that occurred when A was a patient in hospital. After receiving treatment in hospital, A was taken to a single room to recover. Another patient entered A's room several times in an erratic and alarming manner before being removed by nursing staff. However, during the night, the other patient entered A's room again and sexually assaulted them. When nursing staff became aware of A shouting, they removed the other patient from the room. After this, the other patient did not interact with A again and A later reported the incident to the police.

C complained as A felt that not enough was done to prevent the other patient from interacting with A and ultimately sexually assaulting them. In addition to this, C complained about the board's handling of A's complaint.

We took independent advice from a nurse. We found that nursing staff acted reasonably, both before and after the incident. We acknowledged that A had been through an extremely distressing experience, however, based on the circumstances at the time, and in the context of a hospital environment, we concluded that there was no indication that nursing staff failed to carry out any actions that they should have done. As such, we did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

In respect of how the board handled A's complaint, we were satisfied that this was done in a reasonable and appropriate manner. From our review of the evidence, it appeared that the board did not receive documentation from A's advocate. This meant that the board communicated directly with A and appeared to have been genuinely unaware that an advocacy service was assisting A. The board had also arranged to provide the stage 2 response to A at a home visit. While we appreciated that it would have been helpful for A to have sight of the board's stage 2 response before the visit took place, we did not consider this amounted to a significant failing on the board's part. Overall, we considered the evidence suggested that the board took this complaint very seriously and that they made a genuine attempt to handle it in a sensitive and person-centred manner. As such, we did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.