

SPSO decision report

Case: 201906798, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: admission / discharge / transfer procedures
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about the care their parent (A) received at Forth Valley Royal Hospital and Falkirk Community Hospital.

We took independent advice from a nursing adviser. We did not identify any failings regarding the care provided to A at Forth Valley Royal Hospital and so did not uphold this aspect of the complaint. However, regarding the care provided to A at Falkirk Community Hospital we found that:

A was unreasonably transferred to a four-bedded room rather than a single room;

there was an unreasonable delay in A having their dietary/fluid requirements assessed by nursing staff following their admission to Falkirk Community Hospital; and

A was not given prescribed medication while awaiting discharge from hospital.

We upheld this aspect of the complaint.

C also complained about the board's handling of their complaint. We found that the board did not consider whether C had authorised their sibling to raise a complaint on C's behalf. We upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for transferring A to a four-bedded room at Falkirk Community Hospital rather than a single room; the delay in assessing A's dietary/fluid requirements on their admission to Falkirk Community Hospital; not giving A their prescribed medication while they were awaiting discharge from hospital; and not confirming whether C had authorised their sibling to make a complaint on their behalf about the out-of-hours GP. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets

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

- Patients receiving palliative/end of life care should be transferred to a single room. In the event that this is not possible, where appropriate, they and/or their family/carer should be consulted prior to the transfer going ahead.
- Patients should receive prescribed medications while awaiting discharge from hospital.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Complaints should be handled in line with the board's complaints handling procedure including consideration being given to checking whether individuals have authorised a person to make a complaint on their behalf, particularly where multiple complaints are received from members of the same family.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.