

SPSO decision report

Case: 202208175, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained about the care and treatment provided to their parent (A). A was admitted to hospital (Hospital 1) following a period of delirium which was a result of a urinary tract infection (UTI). They were treated with antibiotics but their delirium continued. A was transferred to another hospital for a period of rehabilitation (Hospital 2). C said that a nurse refused to take a urine test when A was showing symptoms of a further UTI, on the basis that A had no temperature. C also complained about a delay in prescribing antibiotics. A's condition deteriorated again during their admission. C asked for a doctor to be called but they were told that no doctors were available. A deteriorated further that night and required admission to Hospital 1, where they died the following day.

C complained that A was denied access to a doctor. They also complained about communication and a lack of compassion from staff. A's admission was during a time when visiting was restricted because of COVID-19 guidelines. C complained that staff should have allowed more frequent access to A when A was confused and distressed.

We took independent clinical advice from a consultant geriatrician (specialist in medicine of the elderly). We found that A's symptoms were not sufficiently clear to have merited a prescription of antibiotics sooner than they were prescribed. We noted that deterioration in older frail adults is often unpredictable and rapid, and found no failings in care and treatment provided to A. Based on the information available, we found no failings in communication, although we noted that the board had apologised to C already for certain communication failings. We found that staff were following the appropriate policies for visiting.

Therefore, we did not uphold C's complaint.