

---

# Grampian Health Board prosecuted after death of patient

## Description

Grampian Health Board, also known as NHS Grampian, has been prosecuted following the tragic death of a patient in Aberdeen. The incident involved 40-year-old Vincent Mulsant, who passed away at the Royal Cornhill Hospital on March 28, 2020. The health board's guilty plea highlights significant lapses in patient safety and care, underscoring the critical need for stringent oversight in healthcare settings.

NHS Grampian is responsible for overseeing healthcare services across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, and Moray. This includes ensuring the safety and well-being of all patients within their facilities. Mr. Mulsant's case, however, revealed disturbing gaps in these safety protocols. Admitted on December 31, 2019, his hospital stay was fraught with incidents that ultimately led to his untimely death.

During his time at the hospital, Mr. Mulsant managed to abscond from the ward twice, on February 19 and February 22, 2020. These episodes of absconding, which should have raised significant alarms, led the hospital to place him under constant supervision. Despite this increased vigilance, the tragic outcome was not averted. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) conducted an investigation and found that NHS Grampian had failed to adequately manage the risks posed to Mr. Mulsant's health and safety.

The events of March 28, 2020, were harrowing. Two staff members found Mr. Mulsant lying unresponsive on the bathroom floor. Immediate efforts by the hospital staff, followed by paramedics, were unsuccessful, and Mr. Mulsant was pronounced dead at the scene. This tragic event brought to light severe deficiencies in the hospital's patient safety measures.

In response to Mr. Mulsant's death, Royal Cornhill Hospital has made several changes to the management of its in-patient wards. These changes aim to enhance patient safety and ensure that similar incidents do not occur in the future. Specific measures include stricter supervision protocols, improved staff training, and the implementation of more comprehensive risk assessment procedures. These steps are designed to provide a safer environment for all patients, particularly those deemed vulnerable.

On August 8, 2024, NHS Grampian pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 3(1) and 33(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The court imposed a fine of £60,000 on the health board, along with a £4,500 victim surcharge. This penalty reflects the gravity of the failures that led to Mr. Mulsant's death and serves as a cautionary tale for other healthcare providers.

An HSE spokesperson commented on the case, stressing the importance of robust systems to protect vulnerable patients in hospital settings. "This tragic case highlights the need for suitable and sufficient systems to be put in place to ensure that vulnerable patients are kept safe while they are in hospital," the spokesperson stated. The case underscores the critical need for continuous improvement and vigilance in patient care, ensuring that all patients receive the protection and

---

attention they deserve.

To provide more context, it is essential to understand the specific failings identified by the HSE. The investigation revealed that the supervision protocols at Royal Cornhill Hospital were insufficient. Despite Mr. Mulsant's previous attempts to abscond, the measures put in place did not adequately mitigate the risks. The hospital's risk assessment procedures were found lacking, and the communication between staff members regarding Mr. Mulsant's condition and needs was inadequate.

Moreover, staff training on handling patients with a history of absconding or other high-risk behaviors was found to be insufficient. The lack of a standardized approach to such cases contributed to the failure to prevent Mr. Mulsant's death. These findings have prompted NHS Grampian to review and overhaul its training programs, ensuring that all staff are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage high-risk patients effectively.

In addition to procedural changes, Royal Cornhill Hospital has invested in infrastructure improvements. These include enhancing the security of wards to prevent patients from absconding and upgrading monitoring systems to ensure immediate detection of any incidents. The hospital has also established a dedicated team to oversee the implementation of these changes and to conduct regular audits to ensure compliance with new safety protocols.

The prosecution of NHS Grampian serves as a stark reminder of the paramount importance of patient safety in healthcare settings. It is a call to action for all healthcare providers to rigorously assess and continuously improve their safety protocols. The death of Vincent Mulsant has not only prompted necessary changes at Royal Cornhill Hospital but also highlighted the broader need for systemic improvements in patient care practices.

By learning from this tragic incident, healthcare institutions can better safeguard their patients, ensuring that such a tragedy does not occur again. Continuous vigilance, comprehensive training, and robust safety systems are essential components in the quest to provide safe and effective healthcare for all.

## **CATEGORY**

1. Aberdeen

## **POST TAG**

1. Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
2. NHS
3. Vincent Mulsant

## **Category**

1. Aberdeen

## **Tags**

1. Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
2. NHS

### 3. Vincent Mulsant

**Date**

20/09/2024

**Date Created**

11/08/2024