

SPSO decision report

Case: 201200664, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr and Mrs C's son was admitted to hospital for surgery to correct a squint. He was discharged the same day but had to be re-admitted three days later as his eye had become infected. Mr and Mrs C were unhappy that their son has since had to endure the pain and trauma of five further operations, and that despite these, the prognosis for his eye remains poor.

Mr and Mrs C were critical of the care and treatment given to their son both during and after the operation. They said that his eye should have been patched immediately afterwards, which would have prevented infection. They also maintained that as the infection was so rare, medical staff involved were uncertain about treatment and had been unable to predict any degree of success for any of the procedures undertaken.

Our investigation took into account all the relevant information, including complaints correspondence and the relevant clinical records. We also took independent advice from a medical specialist in paediatric ophthalmology (the anatomy, physiology and diseases of the eye in children).

Our adviser said that the decision to operate was correct, that all the procedures undertaken were reasonable and appropriate, and that the care and treatment provided were satisfactory. He did not consider that the lack of an eye patch had had any effect. However, he said that Mr and Mrs C could have been given a more detailed explanation about how the infection had occurred. He said it was unclear from the records what had or had not been discussed with them, and that the consent forms used did not provide space to record the aims or possible risks or complications of an operation. We did not, therefore, uphold Mr and Mrs C's concerns about their son's treatment, although we did uphold their complaint that the explanation given was not reasonable.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise to Mr and Mrs C for failing to provide a full explanation; and
- satisfy themselves that their consent forms are adequately formatted to allow the recording of information about the aims and risks of surgery.