

SPSO decision report

Case: 201407131, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the care her daughter (Miss A) received at Wishaw General Hospital's A&E department after she injured her knee. Mrs C said that it took several visits to the hospital before a magnetic resonance imaging scan (MRI - a scan which can show injuries to cartilage, ligaments and tendons) was carried out which identified a significant injury to Miss A's knee-cap. Mrs C was also dissatisfied with the orthopaedic department's communication with her in relation to Miss A's surgery.

We took independent advice from a consultant in emergency medicine and a consultant radiologist. We found that the x-ray performed at Miss A's initial presentation to the A&E department was interpreted satisfactorily. In addition, we took into consideration that knee injuries in general can be difficult to initially assess due to pain and swelling, so it was therefore appropriate that staff arranged a follow-up appointment. We did not find that there was any undue delay in carrying out the MRI scan which was arranged when Miss A's injury did not settle.

We concluded that the orthopaedic department should have explained more clearly to Mrs C what the operation entailed. This was acknowledged by the board but not reflected in their response to the complaint which we were critical of. Furthermore, they should have kept Mrs C pro-actively informed about the factors that affected the operation not going ahead on a particular day.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise for failing to respond to Mrs C's concerns about communication issues surrounding the operation and share these findings with relevant staff.