

SPSO decision report

Case: 201501652, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Miss C complained to us that staff at Hairmyres Hospital and Monklands Hospital failed to provide her with appropriate and timely treatment, which resulted in the removal of her gallbladder. We took independent advice on this complaint from a medical adviser, who is a consultant general surgeon. We found that Miss C had been investigated and treated appropriately for her gallbladder disease within a reasonable time-frame. Whilst there was a short delay in referring her for a scan and in providing a prescription when she was discharged from hospital, these did not have an adverse impact on her care. In view of this, we did not uphold the complaint.

That said, Miss C's consultant had referred her to another consultant when she made a complaint about him. Miss C's care was not compromised by the change of consultant, but this was not in line with guidance from the General Medical Council (GMC), which states that a doctor should not end a professional relationship with a patient solely because of a complaint the patient has made about them.

Miss C also complained to us that staff in the hospitals had failed to communicate with her adequately throughout the treatment referral process. We found that there had been some failings in relation to communication. We upheld this aspect of Miss C's complaint, although we noted that the board had already apologised to her for these failings.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- make the consultant aware of the adviser's comments about Miss C's transfer of care to a different consultant being contrary to guidance from the GMC; and
- provide evidence that the failings identified have been fed back to relevant staff.