

SPSO decision report

Case: 201502623, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C was booked in at the Western General Hospital for a colonoscopy (examination of the bowel with a camera on a flexible tube). She phoned the board in advance to let them know that, as she required sedation for this procedure, she would need an overnight stay in hospital. However, when she attended, she was told that no beds were available and that she would either need to reschedule or have the procedure using gas and air. Ms C has a history of suffering serious pain during these procedures and her records noted that she would require sedation. As a result of her symptoms, the time since her last colonoscopy and her family history of bowel cancer, Ms C felt that she could not reschedule and agreed to go ahead with the procedure. She found the procedure very painful. Although she was asked a number of times during the procedure whether she would like them to stop, she agreed to it proceeding. She felt that the board had placed her in an impossible situation. She brought her complaint to us.

We considered the evidence available and noted that she had followed the board's guidance for those requiring sedation for colonoscopies. However, we also noted that there are times where procedures have to be cancelled due to a lack of beds. Ms C was advised, when she booked her overnight stay, that this could not be guaranteed and she was given the option of rescheduling. We acknowledged the distress this situation had caused her, but we found that the board's actions were reasonable under the circumstances. Therefore, we did not uphold her complaint.