

SPSO decision report

Case: 201508302, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that an orthopaedic consultant at Raigmore Hospital did not examine her, and instead transferred her care to a different orthopaedic doctor. Mrs C acknowledged that there had been electrical power loss at the hospital affecting the ability to carry out an x-ray of her painful foot. However, she felt that the doctor could have assessed her, given her medical records were available.

We took independent medical advice from an orthopaedic consultant. We were unable to clearly determine whether the doctor had access to all of the relevant electronic medical records and previous x-rays taken, given the power loss. We considered that it was reasonable for the doctor to rearrange the appointment and transfer Mrs C's care to the orthopaedic consultant who had previously treated her. However, we were critical that Mrs C had to wait a further three months to be reviewed. We considered this wait to be unreasonable. The board have since taken steps to address the delays by employing more staff.

Mrs C also complained that the board's response to her complaint was delayed and contained inaccurate information. We did not identify evidence to support her concern that the board's response was inaccurate. In addition, we found that although there was a delay in the board replying to the complaint, this was not unreasonable given that Mrs C was kept informed about the progress of the board's investigation in accordance with national complaints handling guidance.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- issue a written apology to Mrs C for the additional delay in being reviewed.