

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201700208, Lanarkshire NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C had a fall in her home and sustained a fracture of her upper arm. She complained about the way a body bandage had been fitted at Monklands Hospital the following day and about the aftercare advice she was given. A nurse had fitted the bandage over her clothing, with advice that the bandage should be removed each night. Mrs C said that when she returned to the fracture clinic three days later, a nurse told her the bandage had been incorrectly fitted, and re-fitted it underneath her clothing.

Mrs C's fracture had not healed properly, leaving her in pain and requiring surgery. She believed that the way the injury was bandaged when she initially attended Monklands Hospital, and the aftercare advice about removing it at night, had caused her ongoing problems.

We took independent advice from a consultant orthopaedic surgeon. The adviser explained that the purpose of the body bandage for fractures of this type is to provide some support and comfort to the patient, not to provide fracture stability. They advised that the way it was fitted was not material to the outcome in terms of Mrs C's recovery. They noted, however, that removing it would have caused her more pain. The only failing the adviser noted was the lack of consistency of advice regarding the way the bandage was fitted, but they noted that the board appeared to have addressed this by coming up with a standard protocol for these fractures.

In relation to the advice to remove the bandage at night, the adviser reiterated that the purpose of the bandage was not to provide fracture stability, and accordingly its removal would not have affected recovery. Because the focus of our investigation was on whether Mrs C's recovery was affected by the fitting of the body bandage and the aftercare advice, we did not uphold the complaints.