

SPSO decision report

Case: 201705974, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Following a fall at home, Mrs C was taken to Wishaw General Hospital where scans were taken. Mrs C was told by a doctor that the scan results suggested that breast cancer, which she had suffered from previously, had returned. Discussions were held with the breast cancer nurse and the oncology (cancer treatment) department, who were not convinced that the results were evidence of metastases (when cancer spreads from the initial site to a secondary site). Mrs C had to wait until the outcome of further scans over an eight week period before being told that her condition was benign (non-cancerous) and that there was no metastases. Mrs C complained that it was inappropriate for staff to have told her that scans had shown the possibility of metastases.

We took independent advice from a consultant radiologist. We found that it was reasonable for staff to conclude that initial scan results showed signs which could have been attributable to metastases. We found that Mrs C had symptoms that are considered concerning for metastatic disease from breast cancer. We, therefore, considered that it was appropriate to make Mrs C aware of the concerns around potential metastases. We also found that there was no delay in reaching a definite diagnosis. We did not uphold the complaint.