

SPSO decision report

Case: 201810858, Fife NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C underwent surgery at Victoria Hospital to repair a fracture in their left wrist. Following the surgery, infections developed and this led to several further procedures being required to clean the wound and address damage caused by the infections. C complained that the board failed to provide them with appropriate care and treatment. Their concerns included that the board did not detect and effectively treat the infections, and that blood tests were not carried out to check for infection after C was discharged from hospital.

We took independent advice from a consultant orthopaedic surgeon (a specialist in the treatment of diseases and injuries of the musculoskeletal system). We found that recognised complications (including infection) were discussed with C as part of the consent process and that there did not appear to have been undue delay in identifying C's first infection. We also found that blood tests to check for infection were carried out with reasonable frequency. However, the board should have ensured that blood test results were monitored and acted on timeously. Though we noted that there was a delay in responding to a blood test result, which suggested infection was present, this could not itself be said to have negatively affected the overall outcome for C.

We concluded that the overall care and treatment provided to C was reasonable. It was noted that the board had acknowledged the blood test result failing and taken appropriate remedial action. As such, we did not uphold the complaint.