

SPSO decision report

Case: 201905897, Highland NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained that the actions taken in initiating a child protection assessment following an attendance at A&E at Raigmore Hospital with their young child (A) were unreasonable and excessive. A attended with an oral wound and head injury following a fall. During the attendance C also raised concerns about A bruising easily, which prompted the child protection assessment.

We took independent medical advice from an emergency medicine consultant. We considered that the actions taken were reasonable; both in relation to the presenting injury and the concerns surrounding bruising. We noted that medical staff had a professional obligation to report any child protection concerns, and considered they took appropriate action in this regard.

We also took advice from a paediatric consultant regarding the actions following A's admission to the children's ward. We considered that the actions taken were reasonable and in line with relevant guidance. However, we found elements which could have been better, particularly surrounding the communication with C. There was no evidence of medical staff having discussed with C some of the recorded bruises. We noted that clear communication should take place with parents regarding any injuries that cause concern, so that an explanation can be sought to clarify concerns. We fed this back to the board. However, on balance, we did not uphold this complaint.