

SPSO decision report

Case: 202004831, Fife NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C's parent (A) had complained for a number of years about pain in their legs. They considered that their concerns had been dismissed and that they weren't reasonably responded to. A later required a stent and an angioplasty (a procedure to widen narrowed or obstructed arteries or veins) after they experienced a blockage of an artery in their leg. While initially successful, the stent then blocked, leading to a second procedure. A later had their leg amputated. C considers this could have been avoided with earlier treatment.

C complained that the board failed to reasonably respond to issues regarding A's feet and legs. We took independent advice from a vascular adviser (treats disorders of the circulatory system). We found that prior to the severe blockage experienced by A, the actions taken by the board in response to their symptoms of pain and numbness were reasonable. We found that these symptoms were unrelated to the sudden onset situation where A had blockage of the external iliac vessel (relating to the large broad bone forming the upper part of each half of the pelvis or the nearby regions of the lower body) on the left side, and we found that the response to this blockage was reasonable. When the stent then became blocked, we found that the response to this was also reasonable. However, communication with A and their family could have been better in terms of explaining A's symptoms, how A was followed up after the procedure and the possibility that the initial stent could fail.

While there were some communication issues and there should have been further follow-up after the first stent was placed, we found that the overall the treatment provided by the board was reasonable. Therefore, we did not uphold this complaint.