

SPSO decision report

Case: 202301420, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained that the board failed to provide them with appropriate orthopaedic (specialists in the treatment of diseases and injuries of the musculoskeletal system) care and treatment following a fall. The board operated on C's left wrist the day after the fall. Two days later, they performed revision surgery on C's wrist and operated on their left elbow. C said that they had been advised by an orthopaedic surgeon at the board that their initial wrist surgery had not been done correctly. C said they had developed nerve compression pain issues and would require further surgery.

We took independent advice from an orthopaedic consultant. We found that C's initial wrist surgery was reasonable. However, the tilt of the radius was slightly beyond the normal range, which carried a minor increased risk of longer term functional impairment in the wrist. We considered that, if C had not required additional surgery for the elbow, the initial wrist fixation might have been left unchanged, as any potential long-term dysfunction could still have been treated later if necessary. However, given that C was already scheduled for elbow surgery, the decision to proceed with revision surgery on the wrist was considered reasonable. We also noted that key indicators related to pain were appropriately assessed in C's case, and there was no indication that the surgery had been performed in a manner likely to cause excessive pain. Therefore, we did not uphold C's complaint.