

Case: 201101032, Orkney NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: complaints handling
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's two-year-old daughter was diagnosed with hip dysplasia. Mrs C felt that her GP should have diagnosed this sooner. She complained that the GP had not properly carried out developmental examinations of her daughter during the first year of her life. The board told Mrs C that the GP had reviewed her computer records and felt that they contained a reasonable level of detail for such an examination. No abnormality had been observed. They said that the GP's usual practice would be to properly examine a baby at such an examination and that hip dysplasia can be difficult to detect in the early stages. The GP apologised for not having written in the parent-held medical records.

Mrs C, however, was dissatisfied that the board had not presented evidence that usual and proper procedures had been followed. She was concerned that the clinician had not noticed the extra skin crease and leg length discrepancy that she believed had always been present. She was also concerned that the board do not carry out further tests on older babies if hip dysplasia is difficult to detect in early stages. She recalled that her older daughter had had an examination at 8-9 months. The board said that records showed that Mrs C's daughter's hips were examined at birth and at six weeks, and that these examinations were properly recorded. They advised that the 8-9 month examination was discontinued in 2005, after the introduction of new guidelines. Mrs C was dissatisfied with this response and brought her concerns about the board's complaint handling to us. We found that the board had not reasonably considered Mrs C's complaints, as they based them only on the GP's recollections. Given this, we upheld Mrs C's complaint.

Recommendation

We recommended that the board:

- apologise to Mrs C that their handling of her complaint was not reasonable.