

SPSO decision report

Case: 201102340, Grampian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C, who is an advice worker, complained on behalf of her client (Mr A) who had a hernia repair operation. Several days after the operation, a district nurse suspected that Mr A had developed an infection. Mr A saw his GP who prescribed antibiotics. Five months later, Mr A experienced a swelling at the site of the operation, which then burst. Mr A went to the accident and emergency department of a hospital, and was seen as an out-patient on several occasions over the next eight months until he had further surgery. Mrs C complained to us that the board failed to provide a reasonable standard of treatment for post-operative complications following Mr A's hernia repair surgery.

We upheld Mrs C's complaint. We found from looking at the records and obtaining independent advice from our medical adviser, that Mr A had an infected mesh (used to repair the hernia) in his wound that needed to be removed. Hospital staff treated the problem with antibiotics, in an attempt to avoid further surgery on Mr C. However, our adviser said that as surgery was inevitable, the decision to remove the infected mesh could and should have been made sooner. In addition, once the decision had been made to remove the infected mesh, there was an unreasonable delay before the surgery was carried out. We also had concerns that the record-keeping in this case was poor.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise to Mr C for the failings identified in our investigation; and
- reflect on the comments of our adviser in relation to record-keeping.