

Case: 201100279, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment; diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C fractured her right leg and was admitted to hospital for treatment. She was reviewed several times over a number of months. Mrs C complained that the care and treatment provided by the board was not reasonable. In particular, she said she was told by a consultant at one particular clinic that her leg was okay, and she should exercise it as much as possible. Mrs C was unhappy that she was given this advice without an x-ray being taken.

We did not uphold Mrs C's complaint. We found from looking at the medical records and taking advice from our medical advisers that x-rays from before and after the clinic appointment showed that the broken leg was in the process of healing. Our adviser said it was appropriate that Mrs C was told to move her leg, as that was a process known as dynamisation, which could be helpful in establishing a firm union of the broken bones. Overall, the adviser said that the care and treatment provided to Mrs C was reasonable. It took account of her underlying medical conditions and physical situation, and her treatment followed an appropriate course.

Although, therefore, we did not make any specific recommendations to the board, we did point out that they might wish to consider how staff should communicate medical terms to patients in plain language, such as the difference between the 'clinical healing' of a fracture, and 'healing'.