

Case: 201102978, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment; diagnosis
Outcome: upheld, action taken by body to remedy, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C attended a hospital emergency department with his fourteen-year-old son, (Master A) who had injured his leg playing football. Master A was diagnosed with a soft tissue injury around his right leg and was discharged with painkillers. He later went to his GP, who referred him for an x-ray. This showed a significant fracture of the tibia. Mr C complained that his son was unnecessarily subjected to pain and discomfort over an 18-day period.

During our investigation, we took advice from one of our medical advisers. We found that it would have been appropriate to consider x-raying the injured area when Master A initially attended the hospital emergency department, to rule out or rule in the presence of a fracture. We considered that the doctor there failed to carry out reasonable and appropriate investigations by failing to order x-rays. If she had done so, it was likely that the fracture would have been identified and the correct diagnosis made. Had this happened, Master A would also have avoided 18 days of unnecessary pain.

The doctor concerned no longer works for the board and we found that the board should have made contact with her to tell her the outcome after Mr C's complaint had been investigated. They did not contact her until after Mr C complained to our office. However, we found that the board had spoken to other junior doctors. They had also reminded staff that complaints involving trainees should be fed back to the supervisor for their current placement, including for those who no longer worked for the board. In addition, the board had issued an apology to Mr C. In view of all of this, we did not make any recommendations to the board.