

SPSO decision report

Case: 201200889, Orkney NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's daughter (Miss A) fractured her forearm and received treatment under anaesthetic at the hospital to manipulate the bone back into position. A cast was placed on Miss A's arm and she was reviewed on four occasions by a consultant surgeon. As Mrs C had concerns about the treatment the consultant provided, Miss A was referred to a second consultant. Miss A then had further surgery as the forearm fracture had become displaced. Mrs C complained that the first consultant had not taken corrective action when he became aware that the fracture had moved. She was unhappy because her daughter sustained permanent scarring and may not regain the full movement of her arm.

Our investigation found that Miss A had corrective surgery five months after her injury. After taking independent advice from one of our medical advisers, we considered that the treatment provided by the first consultant was reasonable. We also found that there was a possibility that corrective surgery was carried out too early because the bone might have corrected itself over the course of six to eighteen months. Our adviser said that fractures in children heal very fast, and as a child grows there is great remodeling capacity as long as there is about 18 months growth left. Miss A was eight years old at the time of her injury. We did not uphold Mrs C's complaint, as we concluded that there was no unreasonable delay in Miss A's treatment.