

SPSO decision report

Case: 201205065, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

After her appendix was removed, Ms C suffered a number of complications which meant that her recovery was prolonged. She also developed a hernia (an area of weakness in the abdominal wall muscles), and an operation to repair this was carried out. Ms C was in hospital for nearly a month because the operation was prolonged and difficult, and there were concerns about reduced blood flow to the skin edges at the operation site. She was discharged home, and was to have her wound managed by district nurses. Five days later, she was readmitted to hospital and underwent another operation to remove dead skin. Ms C complained that she had not been fit to be discharged and that hospital staff failed to ensure that her wound was healing appropriately. She also complained that district nurses were shocked at the condition of the wound and after several days made arrangements for her to return to the hospital for the further operation.

After taking independent advice from two of our health advisers, a surgeon and a nurse, we did not uphold the complaint. We found that nursing and psychiatric staff had tried to alleviate Ms C's concerns about discharge, and that it was reasonable to discharge her in the absence of any specific reason to stay in hospital such as signs of infection or concerns about the wound. Furthermore, there was evidence that the wound was inspected on the day of discharge, there were no concerns about it and it had previously been dry and clean. We also found it was appropriate to discharge Ms C to the care of district nurses for wound management.