

SPSO decision report

Case: 201301298, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

When Ms C hurt her knee she went to Stirling Community Hospital where she was seen by an emergency nurse practitioner (ENP) in the minor injuries unit. She was diagnosed as having a medial collateral ligament (knee ligament) sprain and sprain of her hamstring. She was prescribed co-codamol (a pain reliever) and advised to see her GP if she had further concerns. She was encouraged to walk.

Ms C told us that the examination and care given to her were inadequate. She was not given an x-ray, nor was her knee scanned. She said that it was not until a month later, after she attended the accident and emergency department, that her knee was scanned and it was confirmed that her cruciate ligament (another knee ligament) had snapped.

During our investigation we carefully considered all the complaints correspondence and Ms C's relevant clinical records, and took independent advice from one of our medical advisers. Our investigation confirmed that Ms C's initial examination had been full and thorough and that the ENP had provided appropriate treatment in accordance with the relevant guidelines. The adviser said that Ms C did not require an x-ray as she had suffered a soft tissue injury which would not be seen on an x-ray. Although Ms C said that her knee had 'popped' and that she had reported this, there was no evidence of this in the records. We decided, on the basis of the available evidence, not to uphold the complaint, as it was not possible to provide independent verification of Ms C's recollection of events.