

SPSO decision report

Case: 201305448, Fife NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the treatment he received at the Victoria Hospital over a period of months. He was admitted there suffering from stomach pains. He had an operation to treat a blockage in his bowel and was discharged, although he was readmitted soon after and operated on again. Mr C remained in the hospital and his condition deteriorated further, resulting in two more operations and a series of significant complications. He said that this had a substantial effect on him, including memory loss, mood swings and depression. He now struggles to work, and felt these complications could have been avoided had his care and treatment been of a higher standard.

As part of our investigation we took independent medical advice from an experienced surgeon. He acknowledged how serious Mr C's complications had been but said they were not due to medical or surgical failings. He said there had not been a delay in Mr C's operations and explained that one of them had only become necessary following Mr C's sudden deterioration. In addition, he explained that surgery prior to this sudden deterioration would have been inappropriate.

Although we recognised how significant this matter had been for Mr C and his family, our role was to consider whether the evidence available indicated that his treatment was unreasonable in the circumstances at the time. Importantly, this did not include the benefit of hindsight. Although we took Mr C's concerns into account, we did not find that there had been any failing in care, or unreasonable treatment.