

SPSO decision report

Case: 201405274, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the physiotherapy and orthopaedic care he received from Forth Valley Royal Hospital after dislocating his knee-cap. He said that staff ignored his on-going symptoms and that he should have had a scan of his knee to identify what was causing him persistent pain. He was concerned that a locum orthopaedic specialist had wrongly diagnosed a meniscal tear (damage to cartilage in the knee) rather than a loose fragment under the knee-cap.

We took independent advice on this case from two of our advisers, one of whom is a physiotherapist and the other a consultant orthopaedic surgeon. We found that the physiotherapy management of Mr C's injury was in accordance with guidance on managing patients who have dislocated their knee-cap for the first time.

Whilst the board said that it would have been appropriate for Mr C to have had a scan prior to surgery, we did not consider that the diagnosis of a meniscal tear was unreasonable given that loose fragment can have similar symptoms. Furthermore, both meniscal tears and loose fragments can be treated by the surgery that Mr C underwent. We also considered that it was reasonable to proceed to surgery without a scan given that Mr C's symptoms were not resolving and were affecting his ability to work.