

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201405374, Tayside NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about her treatment at A&E at Ninewells Hospital. She told us that when she attended with a broken foot she was fitted with a moon boot (a removable cast) and told, since it was the weekend, she was to return home and wait for a phone call on Monday. Mrs C said that she was in extreme pain at home and she said she noted trauma blisters on her foot. She said she phoned the hospital for some advice. She said that the staff member that answered the phone did not give any guidance and said that it was Mrs C's choice as to whether she went back to the hospital or not. Mrs C received a call from an orthopaedic consultant the following day who told Mrs C that she should not have been sent home and asked her go to hospital immediately. Mrs C believed that the delay in treatment had contributed to having to spend more time in hospital and having to have two operations.

As part of our investigation we took independent advice from one of our medical advisers, who said that the doctor reviewing the initial x-ray failed to correctly act on the information that identified that Mrs C's foot was indeed broken. In relation to Mrs C's complaint about the phone advice she was given following her discharge from A&E, our adviser also said was also of the opinion that all requests for clinical advice should be recorded and that when Mrs C reported on-going symptoms, clear advice about returning for further review should have been given. The board apologised and described the action they would take to avoid a re-occurrence of this situation, although our adviser expressed disappointment that it had taken a formal complaint to identify a training need.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- remind staff about the procedure to be followed when a patient phones for medical advice.