

SPSO decision report

Case: 201405884, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained to us that staff had failed to carry out an MRI scan (a scan used to diagnose health conditions that affect organs, tissue and bone) when he attended Glasgow Royal Infirmary after injuring his back at work. Although a junior doctor who examined Mr C had recorded that an x-ray and MRI scan should be considered, Mr C was then reviewed by a consultant orthopaedic surgeon, who decided that they were not required. Mr C continued to suffer from back problems and considered that he would have received treatment for this earlier if an MRI scan had been carried out on the day he injured his back.

We took independent advice on Mr C's complaint from a medical adviser who is an experienced consultant in trauma and orthopaedic surgery, with a specialist interest in lumbar spine problems. We found that an MRI should be carried out on patients where surgery is being considered because of escalating pain and/or neurological deficit or those in whom the pain has persisted for several weeks (this is usually a minimum of six weeks with no improvement). We found that it was reasonable that an MRI scan was not carried out when Mr C attended hospital on the day he injured his back. It was also appropriate not to carry out an x-ray at that time. We therefore did not uphold Mr C's complaint.