

SPSO decision report

Case: 201406676, Fife NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C had gallbladder surgery at the Victoria Hospital. She was discharged without further follow-up but started to experience pain from a wound site. She was referred back to the board by her GP and had further surgery to address this. She was discharged the same day by nursing staff. Ms C complained that she had not been given a follow-up appointment following her initial surgery. She complained that her discharge at the second procedure was inappropriate as she was not reviewed by a member of the medical team. Ms C was also concerned that the board had failed to provide her with appropriate treatment following a further referral from her GP.

After taking independent advice from a nursing adviser and a consultant surgeon, we did not uphold Ms C's complaint about discharge. In relation to her concerns about the lack of follow-up after the first surgery, the surgical adviser confirmed that it is established practice not to offer a clinic appointment in such cases. Regarding the second procedure, we found that it is normal practice for patients to be discharged from day surgery cases without being seen by a doctor. The nursing adviser confirmed that appropriate checks had been carried out before Ms C's discharge. We noted that the board had taken learning from Ms C's complaint and were addressing her concerns about information that was provided to patients at discharge. Although we did not uphold this complaint, we made two recommendations to the board about the action they have taken.

We also did not uphold Ms C's complaint about the treatment she received following her GP referral. The surgical adviser considered that this had been appropriately managed.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- provide evidence to confirm what action has been taken to improve the provision of information to patients on discharge; and
- advise us on the outcome of deliberations on offering patients the choice to see a doctor before discharge.