

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201508839, Lanarkshire NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment provided by the board in relation to her varicose veins. She also complained about the board's communication with her.

Mrs C attended an appointment at Wishaw General Hospital with a vascular surgeon to discuss a procedure to treat her varicose veins. She understood she was to undergo a procedure called vein stripping (where the vein is pulled out from under the skin with minimal incision). However, the procedures, performed at Hairmyres Hospital, were radiofrequency ablations (where the vein is heated with radiofrequency energy causing the vein to contract and then close) and stab avulsions (where several tiny incisions are made in the skin through which the varicose vein is removed). Mrs C complained that she should have undergone the vein stripping procedure. Mrs C also raised concerns about the post-operative advice and care provided by the board, in particular concerning dressing and travel.

After receiving independent advice from a vascular surgeon, we upheld Mrs C's complaints concerning communication and post-operative advice. We found that a number of the board's staff gave Mrs C confusing and incorrect information. However, we did not uphold Mrs C's complaint that she should have received the vein stripping procedure. Rather, we found that the procedure performed was the appropriate one for a patient in her circumstances.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- ensure that supporting staff in the vascular surgery department are aware when procedures are updated or changed; and
- ensure that there is a standardised approach to post-operative advice and care for patients following varicose vein surgery.