

SPSO decision report

Case: 201602749, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the treatment provided to her at Glasgow Royal Infirmary when she sustained a left distal radius fracture (fracture of a bone in the forearm, close to the wrist). Mrs C said that the splint provided for her injury was too big, and that the delay in this being rectified resulted in her having to have an operation to correct the fracture when it displaced. She also felt that her medical history had not been taken into account when treatment was being provided for her arm injury.

During our investigation, we obtained independent advice from two clinicians, an A&E consultant and an orthopaedics consultant. We found that providing a splint for Mrs C's injury was reasonable, and there was evidence that suggested attempts were made in A&E to make sure it fitted as well as possible. We were advised that an injury such as Mrs C's should not be fully immobilised and that the splint being too big, whilst it may have been uncomfortable, would not have had an effect on the fracture position. We also found that Mrs C's medical history was noted in the clinical records and was reasonably taken into account. We did find that at Mrs C's follow-up appointment, as her fracture had minimally displaced, she should not have been discharged and we made a recommendation related to this. However, we found that this did not cause any significant injustice to Mrs C, and therefore we did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- feed back the findings of this investigation to relevant staff, in particular the adviser's comments on the appropriateness of discharge when there is a change in fracture position.