

SPSO decision report

Case: 201603748, Highland NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C, who works for an advocacy and support agency, complained on behalf of her client (Ms A). Mrs C said that staff had failed to diagnose that Ms A had suffered a fracture to her right tibia and broken bones in her right knee when she attended A&E at Raigmore Hospital. Ms A was given painkillers and discharged home. She continued to suffer pain and two weeks later an x-ray revealed the fracture and broken bones. Ms A felt the staff should have arranged an x-ray when she attended A&E.

The board said that Ms A was appropriately assessed by nursing and clinical staff who diagnosed a soft tissue injury and that an x-ray was not required.

We took independent medical advice from a consultant in emergency medicine and found that the staff had carried out an appropriate assessment based on the presenting symptoms and reached a reasonable diagnosis of soft tissue injury. There was no requirement to have arranged an x-ray at that time, although it was subsequently established that the fracture had occurred. We did not feel that the actions of the staff were unreasonable and therefore we did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.