

SPSO decision report

Case: 201605949, Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained to us about the care and treatment provided to him by the board in relation to treatment for his leg problems, and their communication with him. Mr C said that after a course of foam sclerotherapy (a procedure where medicine is injected into the blood vessels, making them shrink) for varicose veins in his legs, he was in a lot of discomfort. He said that he was told at a scan a month later that he had deep vein thrombosis (a condition when a blood clot forms in a vein located deep inside the body) but that he was not given appropriate treatment for this. He also said that he had been told contradictory things regarding the clot in his leg.

During our investigation, we took independent medical advice from a consultant vascular surgeon. We found that although the treatment that was given to Mr C was reasonable, there were two occasions on which follow-up scans should have been arranged but were not. We upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint. We also found that the board had acknowledged that communication with Mr C had been poor, and that the lack of documentation of communication evidenced this. We upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Mr C also complained to us about the board's complaints handling, specifically that it took a long time for them to issue their final response to his complaint. The board accepted that they had failed to respond to Mr C's complaint in a timely manner and we therefore upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- The board should apologise to Mr C for failing to provide him with appropriate follow-up appointments after his scans.
- The board should apologise to Mr C for failing to communicate appropriately with him about the causes of his leg pain.
- The board should apologise to Mr C for failing to respond to his complaint in a timely manner.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Follow-ups should be arranged for two weeks after a duplex scan shows a clot in the gastrocnemius vein.
- Details of appointments should be clearly recorded.
- Communication could be supplemented by a printed leaflet.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.