

SPSO decision report

Case: 201701093, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about treatment that he received at Raigmore Hospital when he was admitted via the emergency department. Mr C had undergone a vasectomy procedure (a procedure where the tubes that carry sperm from a man's testicles to the penis are cut, blocked or sealed) over two weeks earlier and had developed painful swelling. Mr C complained that, after admission for assessment/investigation in the urology department, he was examined and then discharged with advice to manage his symptoms conservatively. Mr C later had to be admitted for a number of days for treatment of an abscess.

We took independent advice from a consultant urologist. We found that there were several factors in Mr C's presentation that meant that, on balance, a more proactive approach to his symptoms would have been appropriate. We upheld this aspect of his complaint.

Mr C also complained that the board's response to his complaint was inaccurate. We found that key dates in the response were incorrect. We noted that the board acknowledged this failing and advised that they had taken steps to address it going forwards. We upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise for the failure to consider and/or document consideration of, a more proactive approach to Mr C's care and for the inaccuracies in the final response to Mr C's complaint. The apology should comply with the SPSO guidelines on making an apology, available at www.spsso.org/leaflets-and-guidance.

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

- All relevant clinical factors should be taken into account and this should be apparent from the notes made in the contemporary clinical records.

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.