

SPSO decision report

Case: 201705605, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division
Sector: health
Subject: appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Following an x-ray of her spine, Mrs C's GP made a referral for a DEXA scan (dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry scan - a scan which is used to measure bone density). This referral, and a further referral, were rejected by the board as Mrs C did not meet the criteria. Mrs C was unhappy with this decision and complained to the board. The board said that because DEXA uses ionising radiation and they were required to assess whether the radiation detriment was outweighed by the benefit of receiving the scan. The board said that the referral criteria require a patient to have a predicated fracture risk of 10%, and since Mrs C's calculated risk was lower than this she did not meet the referral criteria.

We took independent advice from a general medical adviser. We found that the board's referral criteria were based on appropriate national guidance, and we were satisfied that it was reasonable not to offer Mrs C a DEXA scan as she did not meet the criteria. We did not uphold the complaint.