

SPSO decision report

Case: 201705808, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained about a delay in the results of a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan being reported which showed that a small pancreatic tumour, which was being monitored, had grown in size. Ms C also complained that when a computerised tomography scan (CT - a scan which uses x-rays and a computer to create detailed images of the inside of the body) was carried out around four months later, there was a failure to identify a breast lump.

We took independent advice from a consultant radiologist (a doctor who specialises in diagnosing and treating disease and injury through the use of medical imaging techniques such as x-rays and other scans) and a consultant in acute medicine. We considered that there was an unreasonable delay in the MRI scan being reported which would have impacted on the time taken to carry out further investigation of the pancreatic tumour. We upheld this aspect of Ms C's complaint and noted that the board were taking steps to address the delays in the service. We also recommended further action to be taken.

In relation to the CT scan, we found the actions of the board to be reasonable. The scan was intended to concentrate on Ms C's pancreas and liver rather than a general look for cancer anywhere. We found that it was reasonable that every organ was not examined in great detail given Ms C did not have concerning symptoms. Therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of Ms C's complaint.

Recommendations

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

- Patients receiving MRI scans should have them reported within a reasonable time frame.