

SPSO decision report



Case: 201808795, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C, a support and advocacy worker, complained on behalf of their client (A) regarding the care and treatment they received at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital both before and after surgery to remove anal skin tags and banding of haemorrhoids. In particular, A was concerned that they were not properly consented for the surgical procedure; that the surgery and aftercare were not of a reasonable standard; and that information about a post-operative clinic consultation was shared with the operating surgeon.

The board investigated the complaint and apologised for the delay in A receiving pain relief after the operation; for the surgical wound area not being visually checked for signs of inflammation; and for the discharge letter having incorrectly advised A that they would be followed up post-surgery.

We took independent advice from a consultant in colorectal and general surgery. We found that informed consent had not been properly obtained from A prior to the surgical procedure being undertaken. We upheld this complaint.

We considered that there was no evidence to support that the surgery and aftercare were of an unreasonable standard. Therefore, we did not uphold this complaint.

We did not find evidence of failings regarding the sharing of information between surgical staff regarding a post-operative review appointment that took place relating to ongoing pain and bleeding that A was experiencing. Therefore, we did not uphold this complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to A for failing to adequately obtain their informed consent to surgery. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

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

- Surgeons should obtain a patient's consent for surgery in line with General Medical Council guidance.

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.