

SPSO decision report

Case: 201901723, Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained about the care and treatment provided to her by the board in relation to breast cancer screening. Ms C had attended the breast clinic where a mammogram (an x-ray test which can detect breast cancer) noted some microcalcifications (tiny abnormal deposit of calcium salts) in the left breast. These were compared with a previous screening and it was decided that no further investigation was needed. Some months later, Ms C had a further screening and on this occasion it was decided to biopsy the calcifications. The biopsy showed some abnormal features and Ms C was later found to have invasive disease (when germs invade parts of the body that are normally free from them). Ms C complained that pre-cancerous cells were not detected at her screening and there was no follow-up or further investigation at this time.

We took independent advice from a consultant in breast radiology (use of medical imaging techniques such as x-rays and other scans to diagnose and treat disease in the body). We found that based on the comparison of the mammogram images from a previous and the most recent scan, there was no indication to carry out a biopsy and it was appropriate not to take further action at this point. Therefore, we did not uphold the complaint.