

SPSO decision report



Case: 201902015, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division

Sector: Health

Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis

Decision: some upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained that the board's treatment of their breast cancer was unreasonable. Following a routine breast screening, C was diagnosed with breast cancer. They underwent surgery and were told that the tumour was successfully removed and no further surgery would be required.

C was referred to the oncologist (a doctor who specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer) for ongoing treatments including chemotherapy. Before commencing the treatments, it was identified that the initial surgery had not cleared the cancer. Further surgery was organised but that procedure was not successful. Chemotherapy could not be delayed further so C had to undergo a mastectomy (an operation to remove a breast).

Through its own investigation, the board acknowledged that there had been a failure to review the correct and relevant postoperative pathology information from C's surgery. Appropriate action was taken by the board as soon as the error was identified. We took independent advice from a consultant breast surgeon who agreed that overall the failing in C's case was very significant but that it did not result in significant harm as it was discovered and appropriate steps were taken to rectify it before any further treatments were commenced. We upheld this aspect of C's complaint but did not make any recommendations.

C also complained that the board failed to respond appropriately to their complaint. We found that the board took C's complaint seriously, they acknowledged that an error occurred and they committed to reviewing the process to ensure that the same kind of error would not happen again. The board also gave an appropriate apology. Therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of C's complaint.