

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201903225, Forth Valley NHS Board  
**Sector:** Health  
**Subject:** Clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

C complained about the care and treatment provided to them by the board. C presented to hospital with abdominal pain and bleeding and was told that they were either experiencing a miscarriage or an ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy in which the foetus develops outside the uterus, typically in a fallopian tube). C was told to return for a scan in several days.

C complained that the board did not offer a scan at the time of presentation, keep them in for observation or discuss treatment options. C felt that, as a result of the delay in scanning, their condition deteriorated and they had fewer treatment options when they attended another hospital several days later.

We took independent advice from a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist (a doctor who specialises in the female reproductive system, pregnancy and childbirth). We found that it was reasonable that C was not given a scan on presentation as this was outwith scanning hours; and that it was reasonable that they were not kept in for observation or to discuss treatment options. However, we found that C should have been offered a scan within 24 hours of presenting at the hospital, or failing this, as soon as scanning services were available, as opposed to being given the next routine scan appointment. On this basis, we upheld the complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failure to offer them a scan in a timely manner. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [HYPERLINK "http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets" www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets](http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets)

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

- Patients requiring emergency scanning should have this carried out in a timely manner.

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.