

SPSO decision report



Case: 201907549, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C, an advice and support worker, complained on behalf of their client (A). A was diagnosed with diabetic retinopathy (a complication of diabetes caused by high blood sugar levels damaging the back of the eye). As part of their treatment for this, A received intravitreal injections (this involves injection of medication into the vitreous – a jelly-like fluid at the back of the eye).

A received a number of these injections without incident, however, during one procedure, the tip of the needle touched the lens of A's right eye. This resulted in a traumatic cataract (a clouding of the lens, occurring after either blunt or penetrating trauma to the eye, that disrupts the lens fibres) that required further treatment. As a result of this, A had concerns about the administration of the injection. A felt the injection was not carried out appropriately or in line with relevant guidelines.

We took independent advice from a consultant ophthalmologist (a doctor who specialises in eye and vision care). We found that the complication experienced by A was uncommon but recognised. However, there was no evidence to indicate that the injury to A's eye was the result of failings on the part of the administration of the injection. Furthermore, such complications can occur despite the correct guidelines being followed and appropriate measurements being used. We agreed with the board's conclusion that there was no way to conclusively know what factors led to the injury to A's eye. As such, we did not uphold this complaint.