

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201202564, Lanarkshire NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Ms C, who was acting on behalf of Mr and Mrs A, complained about the care and treatment that their son (Master A) received after he fell from a tree and hurt his arm. He went to the accident and emergency department of a hospital, and was discharged after the wound was cleaned and glued. He later visited his GP and was referred to hospital where he had surgical treatment for the wound. However, this did not identify that two pieces of bark were lodged in it, which were only removed during a later private surgical procedure. Master A's parents felt that by not identifying the bark in the wound, the board had failed to reach the correct diagnosis.

We took independent advice from one of our medical advisers, an experienced orthopaedic surgeon. He reviewed the board's notes and all of the associated correspondence and said that, based on the evidence available at the time, the treatment was reasonable. He said that while it may seem to a member of the public that a foreign object should be identified within a wound, such objects can easily move within the body. By the time the private procedure was carried out, it was highly likely that Master C's body had been trying to expel the bark and so it may have been more evident at that point. We agreed that, without the benefit of hindsight, the board's treatment was reasonable. We also noted that the board had explained to the family that they had identified learning points from their complaint. We checked on these and, in light of this confirmation and the advice received, we were satisfied that the board had acted reasonably and that we did not need to make any recommendations.