

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201406639, Forth Valley NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that the prison health centre failed to provide appropriate treatment for the injury to his knee. After injuring his knee, Mr C attended the health centre and was prescribed pain medication. Mr C saw the doctor again a few days later because of the pain in his knee and also because the pain medication had given him a rash. The doctor prescribed a different pain medication and referred Mr C for physiotherapy and an x-ray. Mr C said his pain medication was not working but was advised that the doctor would review his medication after the x-ray results were received. The result confirmed Mr C had fluid and a loose fragment in his knee and the health centre referred him to an orthopaedic consultant.

NHS Scotland's national guidelines for the management of knee pain indicates that if a patient presents with a significant knee injury then they should be referred to A&E, a minor injuries unit or to an orthopaedic specialist which would allow for imaging of the knee to be carried out by x-ray or MRI scan. We took independent advice from one of our GP advisers about the treatment Mr C received and they confirmed that the correct referral protocol – as outlined in the guidelines – was not followed by the health centre when Mr C presented with his knee injury.

In light of the evidence available, and given our adviser's view which we accepted, we concluded that the health centre failed to provide appropriate treatment for the injury to Mr C's knee because they did not refer him to A&E for further assessment when he first presented with the injury. Therefore, we upheld Mr C's complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise to Mr C for the failures we found with the treatment he received;
- ensure relevant health centre staff familiarise themselves with the NHS Scotland guidelines; and
- reflect on Mr C's case and feed back any learning to us.