

SPSO decision report

Case: 201508040, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C had surgery for breast cancer in her right breast. She reported a lump in her breast 11 years later. Further tests were carried out at Forth Valley Royal Hospital but did not show evidence of cancer. Ms C was followed up with repeat tests which identified a local recurrence of cancer. Ms C then had a mastectomy (an operation to remove the breast), which showed no evidence of cancer. Later, a marker clip (a small titanium clip used to mark the site) initially placed at the time of the biopsy was removed along with surrounding tissue, which also did not show evidence of cancer.

Ms C complained that she should have undergone more tests and should have been reviewed every four weeks after the lump was identified. She also complained that the mastectomy may not have been required and had concerns about the lack of action taken in response to the marker clip that had not been removed at the time of the mastectomy.

We took independent medical advice from a consultant breast surgeon and a consultant radiologist. We did not find failings in Ms C's care and treatment before or after the mastectomy. We considered that she received appropriate tests and was reviewed within a reasonable timescale. In addition, given there was evidence of invasive cancer identified from a biopsy and Ms C's history of previous radiotherapy for breast cancer, we considered that the mastectomy was warranted. In terms of the marker clip, we found that there were no failings in relation to mastectomy technique and that reasonable steps were taken to remove it and check the surrounding tissue. We did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.