

SPSO decision report

Case: 201707681, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the standard of aftercare she received at Raigmore Hospital following hip surgery, both in terms of the orthopaedic care (treatment of diseases and injuries of the musculoskeletal system) and physiotherapy care (treatment of disease, injury, or deformity by physical methods such as massage, heat treatment, and exercise). Mrs C said that her thigh should have been physically examined by the surgeon as she found out later that she had weakness in her thigh muscle and that physiotherapy staff did not provide treatment at two appointments she attended.

We took independent advice from a consultant orthopaedic surgeon and a physiotherapist. In terms of the orthopaedic care, we found that an x-ray was appropriately carried out which confirmed Mrs C's fracture was healing. We considered that there was no requirement to perform a physical examination of Mrs C's thigh and it would be accepted that she would have weakness with this type of injury and associated surgery. We noted that Mrs C also received support by way of a referral to the hip fracture service.

In terms of the physiotherapy care, we established that no specific referral had been made to the service in relation to Mrs C's hip. We considered that appropriate treatment was provided in response to the GP referral for carpal tunnel (a medical condition where there is pressure on a nerve in the wrist). Furthermore, reasonable action was taken by physiotherapy staff to refer Mrs C to the orthotic clinic (the branch of medicine that deals with the provision and use of artificial devices such as splints and braces) regarding her leg length discrepancy following hip surgery. We concluded that the aftercare was of a reasonable standard and did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.