

SPSO decision report

Case: 201905268, Grampian NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C, an advice worker, complained on behalf of her client (Ms A) about the treatment which Ms A received following admission to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary with symptoms of right upper quadrant pain and inflammation. Investigations led to a diagnosis of chronic cholecystitis (inflamed gallbladder). Treatment options were considered and it was decided to insert a drain, rather than perform surgery at that time, with a referral to a hepatobiliary surgeon (surgeon specialising in the treatment of the liver, bile duct and pancreas) for ongoing treatment. Ms A was discharged home but was readmitted to hospital as an emergency due to further right upper quadrant pain and required surgery. By the time of readmission, Ms A had not received any correspondence from the surgeon. Ms A said that surgery should have been performed during the initial admission and that the delay in treatment caused her additional health problems.

We took independent advice from a consultant in general surgery. We found that Ms A had multiple medical problems and that upon admission to attempt keyhole surgery would be impossible and open surgery would be challenging. It was appropriate to discharge Ms A with a drain in situation for follow-up by specialists at a later date. Although there were gaps in communication with Ms A, this did not impact on her clinical treatment. We did not uphold the complaint.