

SPSO decision report



Case: 202400979, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained on behalf of their partner (A) about the care and treatment provided to A by the board when they presented to the obstetric triage department 25 weeks' gestation with pain and abdominal tightening. A was assessed as having Braxton Hicks (when the womb contracts and relaxes during pregnancy, also known as 'false labour') given advice on what to do if their condition worsened, and discharged. Four weeks' later A suffered preterm prelabour rupture of the membranes (PPROM) and their child was delivered prematurely.

C complained about the care and treatment provided to A as they considered the assessment at 25 weeks' gestation was a missed opportunity for further investigation or follow-up.

The board's complaint investigation identified that according to local guidelines, A should have been reviewed by a more senior doctor. However, they were of the view that it was unlikely that this would have led to a different outcome.

We took independent advice from a medical adviser. We found that while there were some areas for potential improvement, overall the care and treatment provided to A was reasonable. We therefore did not uphold C's complaint, though we did provide feedback to the board according to the adviser's comments.