

SPSO decision report

Case: 201103218, A Medical Practice in the Fife NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C asked us to take forward a complaint after the death of his mother (Mrs A). Mrs A initially complained to us about a shortfall in care she said she had received from her medical practice from 2003 onwards. She told us that the matter only came to light in 2011.

Mrs A said that, despite repeatedly attending the practice from 2003 to December 2010, she was not checked or referred by the practice to see if she had a more serious underlying condition. Mrs A was diagnosed with lung cancer in or around June 2011 and died in November 2011. Both she and her son considered that there had been a failure to diagnose or pick up on her symptoms from 2003 onwards.

Our investigation, which involved taking advice from our medical adviser, found that while it was clear that Mrs A attended the practice for a variety of medical concerns from 2003 to 2010, she received appropriate care and treatment for the symptoms she presented with during this period. We found no evidence that the practice failed to pick up or diagnose cancer symptoms. Our adviser also said that from reading the progression of Mrs A's symptoms in her medical records, it was unlikely that the outcome would have been altered by an earlier diagnosis.