

SPSO decision report

Case: 201508590, A Medical Practice in the Grampian NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C, who works for an advocacy and support service, complained on behalf of Ms A about the practice's monitoring of her infant daughter (Miss A). Miss A was diagnosed with hydrocephalus (an abnormal build-up of fluid in the brain) at around four months old. Ms C complained that this should have been picked up sooner.

We took independent medical advice. It was noted that, prior to her six to eight week assessment, the health visitor had measured Miss A's head circumference and the measurement had crossed over the top centile. This should have been a cause for concern and should have prompted a referral for further investigation. However, the health visitor had not taken action to alert the practice. The adviser considered, however, that the GP carrying out Miss A's six to eight week assessment should reasonably have looked at the growth charts and sought to satisfy themselves that Miss A was developing normally. They did not do so. We upheld the complaint.

However, the GP had already apologised for not personally examining the growth charts and arranging further action. The practice had reflected on the case and confirmed that they were now checking measurements and centile charts at the six to eight week assessment. We considered this action to have appropriately addressed the identified failings and we had no further recommendations to make.