

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 202002770, Fife NHS Board  
**Sector:** Health  
**Subject:** Clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

C was referred to the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) department of board by their GP after suffering extreme sore throats and infections. A diagnosis of recurrent tonsillitis (swelling of tonsils located at the back of the throat due to infection) and possible reflux (the flow of a fluid through a vessel or valve in the body in a direction opposite to normal) or allergy was offered. C was prescribed Gaviscon and recommended allergy tests, which later showed allergies to dust mites. C was seen again in clinic later where their symptoms were reported to have resolved and C was discharged.

Some years later a pre-cancerous lump was found on C's breast. The results of a biopsy confirmed oesophageal (organ which connects the throat to the stomach) cancer, for which C received chemotherapy and an operation.

C believed that they should have been referred to a specialist following their referral to ENT previously and that the prescription of Gaviscon had been unreasonable. C complained to the board. The board responded with the conclusion of their investigation that, in the circumstances, the prescription of Gaviscon was reasonable and no further referral from ENT was indicated. C was dissatisfied and raised their complaint with us.

We took independent advice from a consultant. We found that the board's actions were reasonable in the circumstances, that there was no indication at that time that further investigation or referral was required and that the board did not unreasonably fail to diagnose or treat any condition. We did not uphold the complaint.