

SPSO decision report

Case: 202003476, A Medical Practice in the Lothian NHS Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained on behalf of their late spouse (A) about the treatment provided to them. A had a history of breast cancer and attended the practice with back pain. A was treated for simple back pain with some sciatic nerve irritation (nerve in the lower back area) and prescribed pain relief. A was later diagnosed with kidney failure caused from metastatic disease (secondary cancer) and died. C complained that the practice had failed to give proper consideration to A's history of cancer when assessing their back pain. C considered that an earlier diagnosis may have increased A's life expectancy as treatment could have been commenced earlier.

We took independent advice from a GP. We considered that A's symptoms had been reasonably assessed and that A's reoccurrence of cancer was not foreseeable any earlier than diagnosed. When A's presentation changed, appropriate steps were taken, with further investigations and referrals to hospital speciality care. As such, we did not uphold this complaint.