

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 202004100, A Medical Practice in the Grampian NHS Board area  
**Sector:** Health  
**Subject:** Clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

C complained to the practice about the treatment that they received when they contacted the practice with back problems. C spoke to a GP and an advanced nurse practitioner (ANP) by telephone during that period due to the COVID-19 restrictions and C was advised to make further contact should their situation worsen. C was taken by ambulance to hospital and after a CT scan was diagnosed as having cauda equine syndrome (a disorder that affects the nerves). C felt that the GP and the ANP should have seen them in person for an examination and that had this been the case, the correct diagnosis of cauda equine syndrome would have been reached sooner and would not have had such a drastic effect on their health.

We took independent advice from a GP and an ANP. We found that C had a previous history of back problems over a number of years which were felt to be sciatica (back and leg pain caused by irritation or compression of the sciatic nerve) and musculo-skeletal in nature and that it was not unreasonable to attribute C's reported symptoms to those conditions. However, when C attended hospital their condition had deteriorated and they had reported new symptoms which were red flag signs of cauda equine syndrome. We did not uphold the complaint.