

SPSO decision report

Case: 202107375, A Medical Practice in the Fife NHS Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained about a delay in diagnosis of cancer due to insufficient investigations undertaken by a number of GP's at the practice. C was later diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. C said the signs of cancer were missed, which was likely due to seeing different GP's at each consultation. In addition to this, C had a history of kidney cancer and considered their history was not adequately taken into account. C attended the practice on several occasions, reporting a number of concerns. C said that considering their history of cancer, the early signs of lung cancer were evident. It was only following a CT scan for C's kidney cancer that the oncology team found evidence of stage 4 lung cancer.

The practice agreed that some of C's symptoms during this time could explain developing cancer. However, they also considered that the symptoms reported could be caused by a wide range of diagnoses. The practice evidenced that multiple x-rays were taken along with blood tests and vital sign checks, and there was nothing to indicate that cancer was developing. Due to these findings, the practice say that they had no medical reason to request a CT scan or refer C to a specialist team. We took independent advice from a GP adviser and reviewed the relevant medical records. We found that C did not present with any symptoms suggestive of lung cancer but a variety of unrelated problems, some of which were long standing. It was noted there was a lack of red flag symptoms of lung cancer, and as such, there was no requirement for a CT scan or to be referred to a specialist team during this period.

In light of this, we found that the overall care and treatment provided to C was reasonable. We therefore did not uphold this complaint.