

SPSO decision report

Case: 202302639, A Medical Practice in the Fife NHS Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C suffered with lower back and right hip pain. C complained about the care and treatment provided by the practice in relation to their diagnosis of Hip Osteoarthritis. C said that despite raising concerns with the practice, they failed to take appropriate action to ensure C's symptoms were further investigated.

We took independent advice from a qualified GP. We found that the management of C's symptoms was reasonable and appropriate steps were taken to investigate C's symptoms. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

With respect to the handling of C's complaints, we found that the practice's complaints handling procedure was not compliant with current requirements. We also found that, whilst their complaints response demonstrated that they had investigated the complaint, the practice unreasonably failed to provide further response to C's subsequent communications or the communications from our office. We therefore upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for unreasonably failing to provide an appropriate response to C's concerns and to the communications of our office requesting a further response to C. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- The practice should provide complete responses to complaints raised. Those handling and responding to complaints should be aware of the complaints handling procedure and the importance of providing full responses both to complainants and the SPSO.
- The practice's complaints handling procedure is consistent with and reflects the Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.