

SPSO decision report



Case: 202302723, A GP Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about the standard of medical care and treatment provided by the practice. C attended the practice with a lesion on their back which was diagnosed as a seborrhoeic wart (a harmless growth on the skin). C underwent cryotherapy treatment (the use of extreme cold to freeze and remove abnormal tissue) but this was unsuccessful. Therefore, the practice made a routine referral for an outpatient hospital appointment to have the lesion removed surgically. C opted to see a private consultant dermatologist (skin specialist) and was diagnosed with cancer. C felt that the practice misdiagnosed their skin cancer which led to a delay in receiving appropriate treatment.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that the care and treatment C received when they first attended the practice was reasonable. However, the practice failed to record a clear description of the lesion in the medical records. This is essential to ensure that subsequent viewers of the lesion can assess whether there has been any significant change. Therefore, we could not say that subsequent care and treatment had been reasonable and upheld C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failing identified. 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:

- When managing and treating skin lesions, the medical records should contain all relevant information to ensure that subsequent viewers of the lesion can assess whether there has been any significant change in the lesion.

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.