

Case: 201004700, A Medical Practice, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment; diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, action taken by body to remedy, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C fell and slipped on ice. Some days later, she began to feel pain and her GP diagnosed a fractured tailbone. Approximately two weeks after the fall, she was rushed to hospital where she was diagnosed with an abscess. As a result of the abscess, she had to have surgery and it was some time before she made a full recovery.

Ms C complained to the practice about the misdiagnosis and also about the attitude of the GP during the visit. We sought advice from our independent medical adviser who confirmed that, from a clinical standpoint, the initial consultation had failed to achieve the correct diagnosis. However, the practice's response to the complaint provided a full explanation, apologies where necessary and also the offer to meet with Ms C to discuss the matter. Although we upheld this aspect of this complaint, we did not consider that there was anything more that we could reasonably expect the practice to do as a result of the complaint and so did not make any recommendations.

In relation to Ms C's complaint about the attitude of the GP, we noted that the practice acknowledged that there was an initial difficult telephone conversation and the GP apologised for this and for the way in which they came across to Ms C. On balance, in the absence of evidence to confirm exactly what was said and, as importantly, the way in which it was said, we were unable to uphold this aspect of Ms C's complaint.