

SPSO decision report

Case: 201202051, Grampian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained that staff at a physiotherapy department failed to adequately manage her symptoms of severe back pain and limited mobility. Staff initially examined her and determined that she should be given conservative management (medical treatment avoiding radical therapeutic measures or operative procedures) of her pain with physiotherapy and acupuncture before she was referred for a magnetic resonance imaging scan (MRI - a scan used to diagnose health conditions that affect organs, tissue and bone). She then had a number of appointments with a physiotherapist and acupuncture was arranged. Ms C felt that her pain had continued to get worse. She then elected to have an MRI scan carried out privately. The scan showed that a surgical procedure was needed, and Ms C had this procedure privately.

Ms C complained that the physiotherapist did not refer her for an MRI scan. We took independent advice from one of our medical advisers who specialises in physiotherapy. She reviewed the board's policy for referral for an MRI scan and Ms C's clinical records. The adviser said that the treatment Ms C received was appropriate and that it was reasonable that she was not referred earlier for an MRI scan. She also confirmed that the physiotherapist followed the appropriate protocol for referring Ms C.