

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201203000, NHS 24  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment; diagnosis  
**Outcome:** no decision reached

### Summary

Miss C had been attending her GP for a number of months with a suspected prolapsed disc (ruptured disc in the spine). Before her scheduled orthopaedic (medicine of the orthoskeletal system including the spine) appointment, her condition deteriorated suddenly. She experienced severe pain and numbness in her legs.

Due to a lack of response from her medical practice, Miss C contacted NHS 24 for advice. NHS 24 contacted the medical practice and arranged a home visit. Miss C was then advised to attend her hospital appointment, but she continued to be in severe pain. She called NHS 24 again and arrangements were made for an out-of-hours GP to contact her. The GP contacted Miss C and discussed her symptoms, which had worsened and included numbness, pain when urinating and burning sensations in her legs. The GP did not visit her or suggest a hospital attendance. Miss C was advised to self-assess her condition overnight.

The following afternoon, Miss C was admitted to hospital where she was diagnosed with cauda equina (a disorder that affects the nerves). Miss C complained that NHS 24 did not provide full details of her symptoms to the out-of-hours GP, resulting in a delay to diagnosis which has left her with nerve damage that may be permanent.

Upon reflection, after submitting her complaint to us, Miss C decided that she was satisfied that NHS 24 had in fact provided full information to the GP. She accepted NHS 24 's apology for other incorrect information provided by their staff, as well as their reassurance that steps would be taken to prevent similar issues in the future. She withdrew her complaint, and so we did not reach a finding on it.