

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201204045, A Medical Practice in the Grampian NHS Board area

**Sector:** health

**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis

**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Ms C complained to us that, at a medical appointment, a GP unreasonably requested her granddaughter (Miss A) to make a further appointment to discuss her low mood. This was the third issue that Miss A raised during the consultation, and Ms C felt that her granddaughter had little choice but to comply with the GP's request. Ms C felt that this had left her granddaughter in a vulnerable position.

As part of our investigation, we took independent advice from one of our medical advisers. The adviser noted that low mood was a potential symptom of depression. However, the adviser also noted that a doctor would, ordinarily, assess the patient while the patient was making such a statement (for example, by observing eye contact). The adviser also noted that there was a delay of around a month before the subsequent appointment was made, at which point Miss A declined the offer of assistance from a mental health worker.

Even taking account of the doctor/patient dynamic and acknowledging that it took courage for Ms C's granddaughter to raise the issue with her GP, the adviser noted that the GP had followed accepted practice. In addition, the delay in Miss A making the subsequent appointment (in addition to the offer of a mental health worker being refused) indicated that the GP's request was reasonable.