

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201304268, A Medical Practice in the Tayside NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C said that she had a contraceptive implant fitted and when it was near the end of its life, she attended her GP for a replacement. She complained that she was told that because of her high blood pressure (BP) it was not possible to do so. As it appeared that Ms C was not taking her medication to reduce her BP, she was advised to do so and return to the practice in six to eight weeks time for review.

Ms C attended again to have her implant reinserted but again her BP was noted to be very high. She was told that if there was an attempt to replace it there was a risk of uncontrolled bleeding and it was agreed that she should attend a local hospital for replacement. Ms C felt that she had been given unreasonable care and treatment because the reason why she had an implant fitted in the first place was because of her BP. She complained that the GP's actions left her without effective contraception.

During our investigation, we took independent advice from one of our medical advisers, who is a GP. The adviser said that although the GP said she had acted in Ms C's best interests and followed national advice on implantable progesterone contraception like the type used by Ms C, she had in fact misunderstood the advice. In cases similar to Ms C's, the benefits of remaining on the contraceptive, despite her BP, would likely outweigh the risks as it was recognised as a safer option for women with high BP. In the circumstances, we considered it unreasonable that Ms C was left without an effective form of contraception for over seven weeks.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- ensure the GP apologises for the fact that Ms C was left for some time without contraception; and
- ensure the GP undergoes specific training with regard to the safety and contraindications of that particular contraceptive.