

SPSO decision report

Case: 201305253, A Medical Practice in the Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment she received from her medical practice when she attended with clearly visible changes in her left breast. The GP told Mrs C that there was nothing wrong other than a blockage and suggested that she buy starflower oil. Mrs C's health deteriorated over the next few months and nine months later, she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

After taking independent advice from our GP medical adviser and considering the records and Mrs C's comments, we found that the GP had failed to adequately examine her breast. In view of the visible changes, Mrs C's age and the fact that she had a family history of breast cancer, we also found it unreasonable that the GP did not immediately refer her to the breast clinic. Our adviser said that the delay in referring Mrs C there was likely to have had a significant impact on the extent of the tumour and the level of treatment Mrs C required. However, the practice had carried out a significant event review, had demonstrated that they had learned lessons from the complaint and had apologised to Mrs C. In view of this, we did not need to make any recommendations.