

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201400137, Highland NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained that the board had neither diagnosed nor treated her eye condition reasonably. She also felt they had not given her sufficient information about medication she was prescribed previously (Mrs C felt she should have been made aware of the possible visual side effect, as her medication was ultimately thought to have contributed to her subsequent eye condition). She was also unhappy with the board's response to her complaint.

Mrs C's complaint made it clear how strongly she felt about this matter and how much her condition had affected her. Although we recognised that and took it into account, our role was to consider whether the board's steps were reasonable in the circumstances at the time. We took independent medical advice from three advisers – a GP, an ophthalmologist (a doctor who examines, diagnoses and treats diseases and injuries in and around the eye) and a rheumatologist. They all thought that medical staff had, overall, taken reasonable steps to diagnose and treat Mrs C's condition. This included the steps taken at her medical practice and also at Raigmore Hospital.

In terms of Mrs C's historic medication, our medical advice was that the side effect she highlighted and appeared to have suffered was very rare and, in addition, it was associated with a pre-existing medical condition Mrs C had. The evidence indicated that she was given the standard information leaflet at the time she was prescribed her medication. Although we recognised that this leaflet may not have been as detailed as Mrs C may have liked, we did not consider this meant that clinical staff had acted unreasonably. In terms of the board's response to Mrs C's complaint, we had to consider whether any inaccuracies, viewed as a whole and within context, were enough to make it unreasonable. Our medical advice was clear that Mrs C had suffered from a rare and complicated condition and this was reflected in the detailed correspondence. Although we recognised that any discrepancies would be frustrating we felt, on the whole, that the board reasonably sought to address Mrs C's queries. We did not uphold this complaint.