

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201407889, A Medical Practice in the Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C complained about the treatment her father (Mr A) received from the practice over a five month period in 2013. Mr A had been diagnosed with bladder cancer in 2012 and attended the practice on a number of occasions complaining of back pain. Ms C did not feel that his condition was taken seriously or that adequate treatment was provided by the practice.

We sought independent medical advice on this case. Whilst we generally found that the practice provided good treatment in line with national guidance during the period in question, we found that the GPs could have been more proactive in arranging specialist investigations when Mr A's pain failed to reduce. Our investigation also highlighted significant concerns about the management of Mr A's pain some months later on the day he died. We were critical of the practice for failing to react to the urgency of the situation when family members contacted them, and for failing to have important palliative care drugs available to alleviate Mr A's pain.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- apologise to Ms C's family for the failings identified;
- discuss the adviser's concerns with the relevant staff members at their annual appraisals; and
- take steps to ensure that they have an adequate supply of 'just in case' drugs available to their palliative care patients.