

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201507865, A Medical Practice in the Fife NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C attended both his medical practice and A&E on several occasions with back, leg, neck and arm pain. After a visit to A&E, a scan was arranged and Mr C was referred to neurosurgery. He underwent surgery to improve his pain, although Mr C was advised that he will never be pain-free.

Mr C complained that the practice failed to take his condition seriously and contributed to a delay in his treatment. He also complained that the practice did not arrange a new prescription for painkillers in time for his discharge from hospital after surgery, despite him giving them notice of this. Mr C raised concerns that although he has been sober for several years, the practice was treating him differently due to his history of alcohol addiction.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found the practice made several referrals to neurosurgery and that Mr C did not attend the first appointment, although it is unclear whether Mr C received the letters. The hospital declined further referrals as a scan showed surgery was not appropriate for Mr C at that time. The adviser said there was no indication that Mr C's condition had changed until he attended A&E, when an urgent scan was arranged. The practice then made a further urgent referral to neurosurgery, which was accepted.

We also found it was reasonable for the practice not to have issued a repeat prescription for Mr C's medications until they had received the hospital discharge letter and Mr C had been reviewed by a GP. The adviser explained that this would be the same for all patients in this situation and that there was no evidence the practice had treated Mr C differently in view of his past history of alcohol addiction. We did not uphold Mr C's complaints.