

SPSO decision report

Case: 201508752, A Medical Practice in the Forth Valley NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C, an advice worker, complained about the treatment which his client (Mr A) received when he attended a consultation. Mr A had a previous medical history of facial and arm weakness and was thought to have long-standing hydrocephalus (build-up of fluid on the brain). He saw a GP as he wanted to have further investigations in order to reach a diagnosis. Mr A felt the GP had dismissed his symptoms. Mr A was admitted to hospital two days later with worsening neck and back pain, increasing confusion, poor mobility, right upper limb weakness and urinary incontinence. Over the next six months Mr A was found to have stable chronic hydrocephalus along with possible abscesses (painful swellings caused by a build-up of puss) of his neck and the area between the spine and spinal cord. It was subsequently discovered he had chronic discitis (infection of the vertebral disc space). Mr A believed that the GP had dismissed his symptoms and that his condition had deteriorated because of the delays which he had encountered.

We took independent medical advice from a GP and concluded that the GP had provided a reasonable level of care. When Mr A had attended the consultation the GP was aware of Mr A's medical history, including that he had attended hospital the previous day. He carried out an appropriate examination given the symptoms which were presented. There was no indication at that time for a hospital admission. It was clear from the records that Mr A's condition deteriorated two days after the GP consultation and it was only then that a hospital admission was appropriate. We did not uphold the complaint.