

SPSO decision report

Case: 201600574, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C had attended a series of physiotherapy appointments at the Victoria Integrated Care Centre. However, her symptoms related to a degenerative disc disease in her spine were unresponsive and she was referred back to her GP for further management. She was provided with a home exercise programme and advised of the symptoms of cauda equina syndrome (a spine disorder affecting the nerves).

Mrs C's pain continued and her GP referred her to Queen Elizabeth University Hospital where she had an MRI scan. The scan showed that she had a bulging disc in her lower back which was pressing on the nerves of her leg. Before Mrs C could attend a further specialist consultation which had been arranged, her situation deteriorated. She attended A&E at the Royal Alexandra Hospital with symptoms of cauda equina syndrome and was admitted. The next day Mrs C underwent surgery.

Mrs C complained that the physiotherapist she attended failed to treat her appropriately and that she should have been referred for an MRI scan.

We investigated the complaint and took independent physiotherapy advice. We found that although Mrs C's symptoms were noted to be developing, she was reviewed and her treatment amended accordingly. However, her symptoms did not meet the criteria that would have required her to have an MRI scan and she was given appropriate advice and treatment and referred back to her GP. We therefore did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.