

SPSO decision report

Case: 201602357, A Medical Practice in the Lothian NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C said that although he attended his medical practice concerning his back pain on a number of occasions over a period of two months, doctors failed to note his deteriorating condition. He said that he was given increasingly strong painkillers which failed to work and that although he was exhibiting 'red flag' symptoms, he was not referred for further investigation or imaging. Mr C said that it was not until he attended with his son that he was taken seriously and admitted to hospital as an emergency. He required an immediate operation.

Mr C complained to the practice who said that while they noted that he was in significant pain, Mr C did not show any symptoms or clinical signs that would have triggered an immediate referral for surgery (there were no red flags). They believed that he had been treated appropriately and in accordance with guidance.

We took independent advice from a GP and found that the practice had carried out appropriate examinations. Mr C's pain was regularly reviewed and his painkillers were increased accordingly. They repeatedly checked Mr C for red flag symptoms and an appropriate referral was made for him when his symptoms changed. We therefore did not uphold Mr C's complaint.