

SPSO decision report

Case: 201602908, A Medical Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C, who works for an advocacy and support agency, complained on behalf of her client (Mr A) that there had been an unreasonable delay in the GP practice referring Mr A for further assessment and advice when he attended with on-going abdominal pain and diarrhoea. Mr A had undergone a colonoscopy (an examination of the bowel with a camera on a flexible tube) in hospital several months earlier and had been diagnosed with diverticulosis (small pouches that stick out from the wall of the gut). He had then had a bowel screening test, which showed blood in his bowel motion and his health board had written to him to say that they would arrange another colonoscopy.

Mr A then attended the practice with abdominal pains and diarrhoea. He was prescribed medication and it was recorded that he was hoping to have a repeat colonoscopy from the board. He attended the practice again four weeks later and they sent a routine referral to the board asking for advice about whether he needed further investigation. Mr A was subsequently diagnosed with bowel cancer, which had spread to his liver and lungs.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that the practice had provided a reasonable standard of care to Mr A when he attended with abdominal pains and diarrhoea. The on-going investigation by the board into Mr A's bowel problems fell outwith the practice's remit. It was also reasonable for the practice to send a routine referral to the board asking for advice. We did not uphold Ms C's complaint.