

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201603047, A Medical Practice in the Highland NHS Board area

**Sector:** health

**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis

**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Ms C, who works for an advocacy and support agency, complained on behalf of her client (Ms A). She said there had been a delay in Ms A's medical practice making a referral for her to attend the orthopaedic department when her back problems continued. She further said that the practice failed to follow up on the referral when it was eventually made. While the practice recognised that Ms A felt unsupported, they nevertheless said they had been appreciative of Ms A's difficulties and had tried to help her.

We took independent medical advice from a GP. We found that while Ms A attended the practice prior to her referral, the medical records showed that she had been treated reasonably, that her condition had been monitored, that she had been appropriately examined, and that she had been prescribed medication in accordance with her symptoms and published guidance. There were no 'red flags' (signs to warrant urgent referral).

Although we found that the practice did not issue the referral immediately, once the error was discovered it was issued and sent within the time-frame required by local guidance. An apology had been given to Ms A for the oversight. We did not uphold Ms C's complaint.