

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201605263, A Medical Practice in the Orkney 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 (Mrs A). Mrs A said that for a number of years she had been experiencing symptoms which had caused her concern. She attended her GP again because she had developed a rupture at her navel. Her GP made a referral for her to general surgery and she was given an appointment. However, before the appointment, Mrs A attended again at her GP and at the emergency department because of increasing abdominal pain. Her GP contacted the consultant surgeon asking if she could be seen sooner but she had already been given the first available appointment. At her hospital appointment, Mrs A was given a number of tests which showed likely peritoneal disease (disease of the lining of the stomach). After further tests, she was diagnosed with peritoneal mesothelioma (cancer that attacks the lining of the abdomen).

Ms C complained that Mrs A's GP had ignored the symptoms about which she had been complaining and that had she been referred to hospital sooner, she may have had an earlier diagnosis and her life expectancy may have improved. Mrs A complained to her medical practice, who said that she had not been a regular attendee at the practice and the majority of her symptoms had been respiratory for which she had received appropriate treatment. They added that when she presented with a hernia, she was immediately referred to hospital and that none of her symptoms had given any indication of her final diagnosis.

We took independent GP advice and found that all of Mrs A's symptoms had been investigated and treated appropriately. There had been no delay in referring her to hospital and there had been no suspicion of a cancer diagnosis to which a reasonable GP would have been alerted. We did not uphold the complaint.