

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201701663, Fife NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Miss C had long standing problems with her ears and had a number of operations to deal with this. More recently she began to experience nocturnal seizures (seizures which occur during sleep) which she thought were related to the problems she already had. Miss C complained about the care and treatment she received and that it took too long to get a diagnosis for the seizures. She felt that she had not been listened to and had unreasonably been referred to the psychology service because of stress. The board, however, took the view that her symptoms were unrelated to her existing condition and that her care and treatment had been reasonable.

We took independent advice from consultants in neurology and ENT (ear, nose and throat). We found that the mix of the two conditions from which Miss C suffered required time and effort to investigate and to prove that they were unconnected. We found that the care she received from the ENT and neurology departments was thorough in order to exclude the possibility that Miss C's ear problems were the cause of possible brain disease. We were satisfied that she had been reasonably and appropriately treated. However, we also found that there was a delay of six months between the time her GP referred her and when she received her first out-patient appointment. Once her treatment started, we found that Miss C also had to wait too long for her scans. On balance, we upheld the complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Miss C for the delay in receiving an out-patient appointment and the delay in scans being carried out. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance>.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Patients should receive clinical appointments and scans/tests in a timely manner.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.