

SPSO decision report

Case: 201707513, NHS 24
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the way NHS 24 had handled a phone call from him when he reported that he had been experiencing headaches for over three weeks and was told that he was suffering from migraines. Mr C subsequently went on to develop vertebral artery dissection (a tear to the inner lining of an artery in the neck which supplies blood to the brain and can cause a blood clot) three weeks later. Mr C believed that the call to NHS 24 was not managed appropriately and that he was unreasonably only advised to rest and increase his fluid intake.

We took independent advice from a practitioner experienced in out-of-hours services. We found that NHS 24 had treated Mr C's concerns seriously and they had conducted a clinical investigation report. Mr C had contacted NHS 24 during the hours when GP surgeries are open and, during such periods, the remit of NHS 24 is to provide advice and to direct patients to contact their GP. We were satisfied that, in view of Mr C's reported symptoms at that time, there was no requirement for him to attend hospital or arrange an emergency ambulance and that it was appropriate to direct him to his GP surgery. We did not uphold the complaint.