

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 201800177, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C was referred by his GP to the board's spinal service at Gartnavel General Hospital for assessment. The referral was vetted on receipt and considered appropriate for a virtual appointment. The appointment took place nine months after the referral was received. Mr C's referral was not considered appropriate for the spinal service and he was referred to the board's back pain service for physiotherapy. Mr C complained that he was unreasonably referred back to the physiotherapy service.

We took independent medical advice from a consultant orthopaedic surgeon (a surgeon who diagnoses and treats a wide range of conditions of the musculoskeletal system). We found that the response to Mr C's referral was reasonable as the back pain service was the appropriate service for Mr C to be redirected to. We did not uphold Mr C's complaint. However, we noted that there was a delay in recognising that the referral should have gone to the back pain service in the first instance. The board's vetting system did not highlight that Mr C's referral was not appropriate for the spinal service and we made a recommendation to the board in light of this.

### Recommendations

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

- Have systems in place to ensure that inappropriate referrals are identified promptly.