

SPSO decision report



Case: 201808175, A Medical Practice in the Highland NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C, an advice and support worker, complained on behalf of her client (Mr A) regarding the treatment which he had received from the practice, prior to him being diagnosed with prostate cancer. Mr A had attended frequent consultations with right hip pain and had been referred to physiotherapy (treatment of disease, injury, or deformity by physical methods such as massage, heat treatment, and exercise rather than by drugs or surgery) on a number of occasions. He was also sent for an orthopaedic (treatment of diseases and injuries of the musculoskeletal system) referral which had not helped. Mr A stopped attending physiotherapy as he received no benefit from the exercises or the painkillers which the practice had prescribed.

We took independent medical advice from a GP. We found that initially it was felt that Mr A had a musculoskeletal problem (injuries or pain in the joints, ligaments, muscles, nerves, tendons, and structures that support limbs, neck and back) which was reasonable in view of the presenting symptoms. The practice provided appropriate pain relief and made appropriate referrals for specialist opinions in orthopaedics and physiotherapy. It was only when Mr A presented with pain in his upper spine, which triggered a red flag sign, that blood tests were arranged which indicated possible prostatic cancer. This resulted in an urgent referral to the cancer specialists. We had no concerns about the way the GPs at the practice managed Mr A's reported symptoms over the period and there was no delay in making a specialist referral when he reported a new symptom of spine pain. We did not uphold the complaint.