

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 201903971, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division

**Sector:** Health

**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis

**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

C complained that the health board delayed in diagnosing and treating their cancer. C was referred by their GP to a number of specialists to investigate symptoms they were experiencing. C complained that the board failed to act in response to investigations, particularly MRI scans instructed by the pain management service, which showed a lesion (abnormal tissue) on their back. C was referred to hospital by their GP around three months following the MRI scans with increasing symptoms, and the decision was taken for C to undergo surgery to remove the lesion. C complained that as a result of the failure to act urgently on the results of the MRI scans, they had to suffer intense pain and the diagnosis and treatment of their cancer was unreasonably delayed.

In responding to the complaint, the board said that two MRI scans performed by the pain management service showed a lesion, but as there had been no change between the scans a follow-up in six months was indicated, with a referral to neurosurgery (specialists in surgery on the nervous system, especially the brain and spinal cord). When C attended hospital around three months later, a subsequent MRI indicated that the lesion had progressed and it was identified as the cause of C's symptoms.

We took independent advice from a medical adviser who considered that whilst the MRI scans carried out identified a cystic lesion, they did not reveal signs which required urgent follow-up and, at that time, a diagnosis attributed to a pre-existing condition was the plausible cause of C's symptoms. Investigations did not reveal any signs that would be considered urgent and, without progression in symptoms experienced by C, the radiology reports alone would not be acted upon. We found that investigations undertaken by the board were reasonable and we did not uphold the complaint.